THE LADDER TO HEAVEN

By

AiR

Atman in Ravi

Discover a step by step way to God

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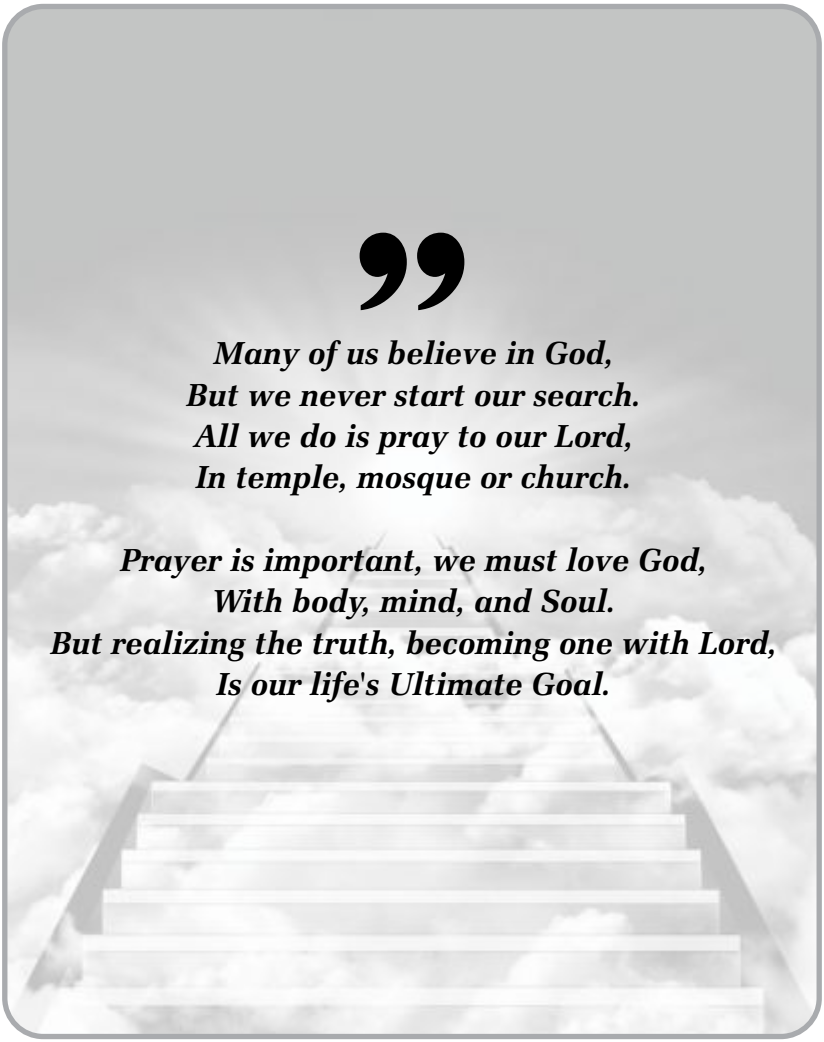


Many of us believe in God,
But we never start our search.
All we do is pray to our Lord,
In temple, mosque or church.

Prayer is important, we must love God,
With body, mind, and Soul.
But realizing the truth, becoming one with Lord,
Is our life's Ultimate Goal.

Preface

Even as an 8 year old child, I used to visit God in the temple. I was devout in my belief and used to fast every Monday to please my God. As a child, I had faith, hope, and belief that one day I will go to heaven.

We all want to go to heaven. We all want to become one with our Lord. Whether we are Hindus who call God, *Bhagwan* or Muslims who refer to God as *Allah* or Christians who pray to the *Heavenly Father*, we all pray to God for a reason.

Some people pray because they are helpless. They have no choice. They are suffering in misery and pain. Thus, they pray to God to save them. Others are fortunate and while they are not suffering, they have desires and aspirations, and they go to God with folded hands to make their dreams come true. Most of the world prays to God, barring a few who are atheists - they don't believe in God or they are agnostics - they are not sure about the existence of God. The rest of humanity prays to a God, a power who is the Creator and the preserver of this universe.

While we pray to God, calling God by different names, the vast majority of humanity believes in God and aspires to go

to their God in heaven one day. Some hope to see their God in a Divine Vision while others wait to be liberated and to be united with God after death. It doesn't matter what our religion is, there is a way to reach God. There is a Ladder that can take us to Heaven.

Religion is only a kindergarten to Spirituality. It teaches us the basics about God and helps us start our journey to heaven. But Spirituality is a university. It helps us graduate in the subject of theology and makes us realize the truth about God, helping us with the Ultimate Goal of God-realization, Liberation, and Unification.

In my journey, I have experienced all the steps of the Ladder to Heaven. I have been blessed to realize several truths about life. This book is an effort to help genuine seekers of God to climb the Ladder to Heaven. It shows a way to God-realization as we pass through self- realization, overcoming the ignorance that we live with.

Come, let us start this journey!

Introduction

My relationship with God started early in my childhood. My grandfather used to hold my hand and take me to the Shiva temple that was near our home. He taught me the meaning of faith and showed me how to pray. He made me realize the power of God. For about 45 years now, I have been fasting every Monday, eating only one meal in 24 hours. This is a sure way to remember God all day long, week after week, just as doing the *Aarti*, a religious ritual that involves body, mind, and Soul is. For the last 25 years, I have not missed doing the *Aarti* even on a single day. Such has been my faith in God.

Over a period of time, my faith evolved. From 8 to 18, I was an innocent kid praying to God, guided by both my father and grandfather. By then, God had become the most important aspect of my life. Like most of the world believes, I too thought that one could not live life without prayer. I believed that God gave us life, just as he controls everything that happens to us. To me, faith had magic. It could make the impossible, possible. Every passing day made my faith grow, till I was in love with my God.

When I started my journey as an adult, I achieved success

after success. It was the story of my school motto, Fide et Labore - Faith and Toil. I always said to myself, “Do your best, God will do the rest!” So, I went about my work, with faith and without fear, climbing one peak of success after another.

My faith made me overconfident as I deleted the word 'impossible' from my dictionary. My trust in God was unquestionable. To make each dream come true, I used to remind myself, “Work as if everything depends on you and Pray as if everything depends on God!” My unshakeable faith made me super successful.

When I was 27, with a lot of achievements in my bag, I had a vision. The Divine vision directed me to build a temple. The temple would have a mammoth statue of Lord Shiva sitting in meditation. As depicted in mythology, it would even have the river Ganga flowing out of the Lord's matted locks. This vision came from God, but I did not have anything to make this happen. I did not have the money, nor the land. I had no idea which sculptor could make such a vision come true. I had no clue what to do and how to make it possible.

But God didn't just give me the vision. He also gave me everything to make it happen. Soon after the Divine message came to me, God gave me so much success and money that I

could buy a piece of land to build the temple. It seemed like I was doing it, but I knew that it was the Divine working through me. I was just His instrument! I found an artist who I believed could make the vision real. The vision came to me in 1993, we acquired the land in 1994 and started work immediately thereafter. On the 27th of February, 1995, the temple was inaugurated.

Even the inauguration was a miracle! We had invited about 3000 people, but it so happened that His Holiness, the Shankaracharya of Sringeri happened to be in Bangalore. He made a rare appearance and consecrated the Shiv Linga. Over 3,00,000 people appeared from nowhere to pray to Lord Shiva on that Maha Shivratri day. There was Spiritual ecstasy in the air as the temple became the most powerful Shiva temple in the world. It was the work of God, not of man!

The sculptor who made the temple became famous overnight. He was commissioned to make the statue of Lord Shiva in several other places. It is another miracle that while he could make beautiful statues, he was not able to replicate this statue again, despite his best efforts. I have no doubt that it was the work of the Divine because the magnificent statue was made without a blueprint, a plan or even a measuring tape. It was Divine magic!

This was a turning point in my life. Till I was 30, it seemed that my faith in God was everything! But after the building of the temple on Old Airport Road in Bangalore, my life transformed. While I continued to achieve success in business, God gave me a lot of money through the temple to utilize for God's work. I had, by then, already started a charitable home for the destitute and the temple collections only made our humanitarian work multifold. Today, we have 3 homes, with over 600 people of all ages, gender, and religions. At first, caring for the poor and destitute was an act of compassion and love. But today, we serve each human being as a manifestation of the Divine.

It has been 25 years since the temple was inaugurated and these two and half decades have transformed my life completely. It has created a metamorphosis. Today, I believe I am not Ravi V. Melwani who built the temple, but rather AiR – the *Atman* in Ravi or the Soul in Ravi. What caused this metamorphosis?

My life journey experienced a path that is so Divinely unique. It started with 10 years of innocent belief that built a foundation. Then I built pillars of faith, trust, hope, and enthusiasm. These made my life grow and ultimately, led me to love God. I call this journey 'The Ladder to Heaven' because it led me from one step to the next, each step leading me closer to the Ultimate Goal.

My love for God made me go on a quest for the Lord whom I was so passionate about. The Lord blessed me with a Spiritual Master who guided me along the way. As I investigated several questions about life and God, I realized the Truth.

Looking back upon my life, I realize that for four decades I was living in ignorance. While my faith in God was unconditional, I was not moving forward in my Spiritual journey, but rather just going around in circles. Then I realized several truths which changed my paradigm of life.

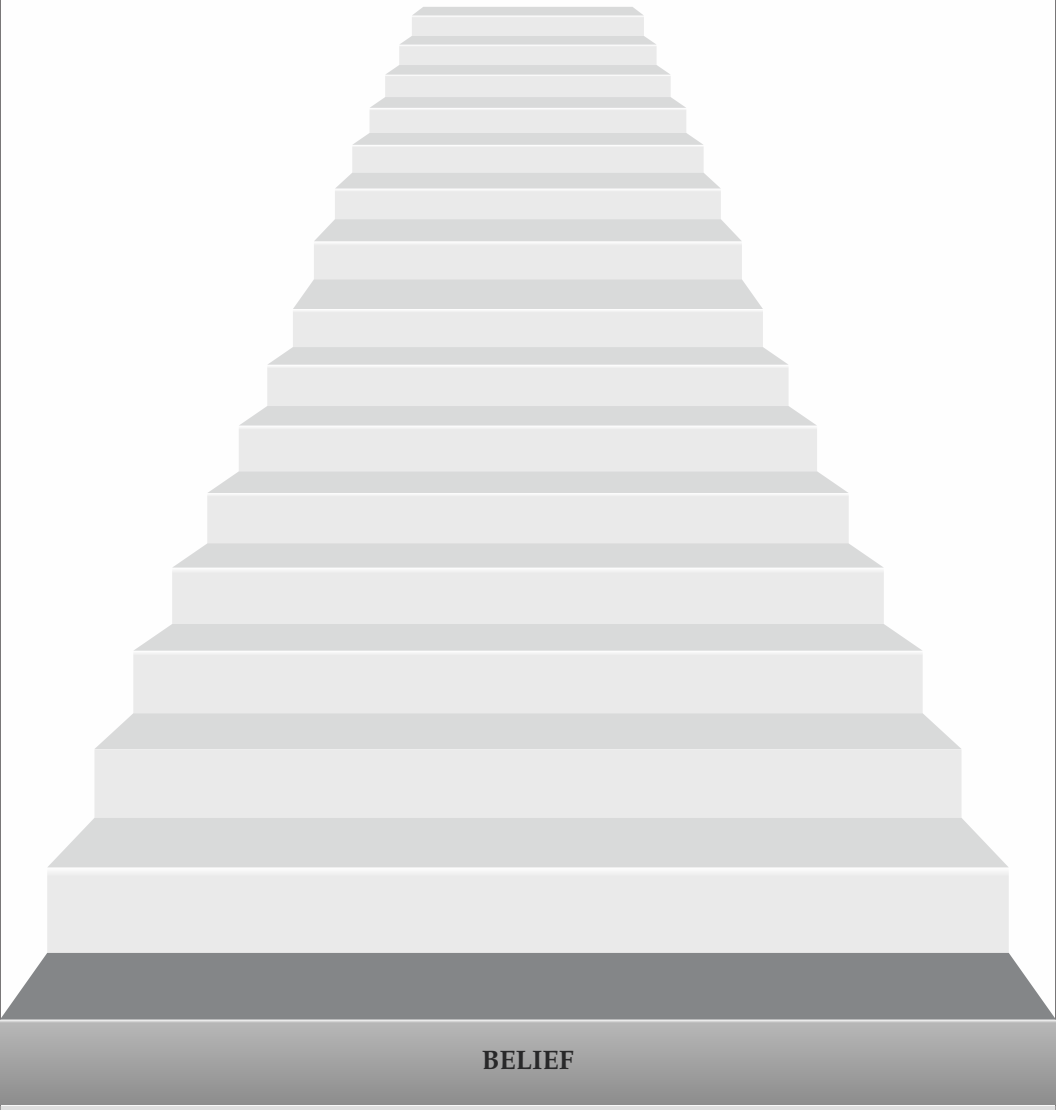
But Realization is not just knowledge. It is an intuitive experience that leads to liberation. We human beings are prisoners that live and suffer pain of the body, misery of the mind, and agony of the ego. While we experience joy and sorrow in cycles, our ignorance makes us suffer this triple suffering. Liberation not only makes us escape from suffering as we live in this world, but it also makes us escape from the cycle of death and rebirth which leads us to our ultimate destination – Unification with the Divine.

Since I was blessed to realize the Truth about self and God and because I had climbed this Ladder to the Divine, step by step with the grace of Lord, I decided to share my journey with the world through this book – The Ladder to Heaven.

STEP 1

Belief

**“Everybody has a choice,
To believe or not to believe!
Those who believe, they achieve.”**



The first step on the ladder to heaven is Belief. It starts our ascent to heaven but not everyone is fortunate to grow up as a believer.

We are born, but we have no choice to decide who our parents are, and when and where we will be born. It seems that we don't choose the circumstances of our life. Whatever be the religion our family follows, we tend to follow the same as we grow up. Of course, we are influenced by our school and our friends, and we learn more about God from the world around us.

No child is blessed with an intellect to decide whether to believe or not to believe. It seems to be a Divine will that starts our relationship with God. Some children are taught to pray every day because their parents do. Others may not be so religious because the circumstances of their life have not given them an opportunity. Whether we are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, or believers of some other religion – this is how we start to pray and believe in God.

However, this changes as we grow into our teens and become mature. Then, we begin to decide how much to pray, and which God to believe in. I was a staunch believer in Lord Shiva since I was 8, but by the time I was 12, I was greatly influenced by the Jesuit institution where I studied. My faith in

God experienced an amalgamation of what my grandfather taught me and what the priests in my school advocated. As a kid, I saw the difference between my God and their God and accepted it without question. I did not pay much attention to investigating how many Gods existed. As I grew up, I believed in the power of faith and did not find it wrong to go to the church in my school whenever I got the opportunity to. However, my devotion belonged to my God, Lord Shiva.

I consider myself lucky that I grew up in an atmosphere where God was an important part of my life, both at home and in school. By the time I passed out of school, my faith in God was very strong. I was blessed to grow up with the belief in Lord Shiva, just as I imbibed the values of the Christian faith. I was fortunate, not to have any conflict in my mind regarding the two.

Today, as I look back at my teenage years, I realize that we have a choice as we grow up. The choice to believe or not to believe in God. As I reflect upon this, I feel grateful that my life started with believing in God. If I look at some atheists, those who don't believe in God, I feel sad for them, because they have missed a very important truth of life. They probably didn't get an opportunity to be mentored well in their early, formative years and lost this blessed privilege of believing in God.

There are also some agnostics who are not sure about God. Somehow, they are confused and do not build faith in their life as they grow up. I sometimes wonder how they doubt that this entire universe, the beautiful world that we live in was not created by a power that we call God. In a way, agnostics are blessed to question the existence of God. But if they do not pursue their investigation in the right way, they lose the treasures of faith and belief.

To start the journey to God, one has to first believe in a Power that we call God. It doesn't matter which religion we belong to. All religions are good. They teach us about God and encourage us to pray. But if we don't believe in God, then prayer is meaningless. The starting point, therefore, is to actually believe that God exists. We must not have an iota of doubt about the existence of God. Do you believe that you have a nose on your face? You don't need to believe it. You know it! You can touch it, feel it, just as you can smell with it and see it in the mirror. Just as we know about several truths, we must know that God exists. The moment we doubt the existence of God, we start our journey to disaster.

There was once a conference related to science and Spirituality and a famous scientist debated the existence of God with a Spiritual saint. They were both intelligent and

after two days of deliberation, they agreed to disagree about the existence of God. Before departing, the scientist visited the saint to bid him goodbye. As he was getting up to leave the office of the saint, he noticed a beautiful globe made of ornate marble with intricate carvings of gold. He asked the saint, "This is a beautiful piece of art. Where did you get it from?" The saint replied in wonder, "I don't remember. One day it just appeared on my table!"

The scientist got a bit annoyed and replied, "If you do not want to tell me where you got the globe from, please just say so! But do not give me a story that the globe just appeared on your table." The saint got an opportunity and replied, "For the last two days, at the conference, you have been incessantly debating that this entire universe and this beautiful earth just appeared from nowhere! And now, you are unable to believe that this tiny globe appeared on my table just out of nowhere. You think that this tiny globe must have a manufacturer, somebody who created it! Then what stops you from believing that a Divine power that we call God created this humongous globe that we live on?" The scientist left after being hugely impacted by this incident. There is no doubt that God exists. The choice is ours to believe or not to believe.

Somehow, we human beings live in ignorance and do not

start our journey to God. We do not believe in God because we do not observe the Universal Laws that he has commissioned. For instance, do you see apples growing on mango trees? Never! Why? Because this is a Universal Law. Just like this law, there are several laws including the Law of Gravity, the Law of Opposites and the Law of Cycles. If man was to pay attention to the Universal Laws, then man would not doubt the existence of God. Those who believe in God know beyond doubt that a Power exists. Our challenge is to believe.

Therefore, we have a choice to believe or not to believe. How does it benefit a man if he does not believe? At least, man must use the little intelligence that he has to understand the reward of believing in God. If not for the love of God, at least for the love of himself, man must learn to believe in the Power that created the universe.

How do we demonstrate our belief in God? It is through prayer. Prayer is communicating with God and it is only those who believe in God who fold their hands in prayer. Belief is the first step on the Ladder to Heaven. If we do not pray and demonstrate our faith in the Power we call God, we will just wander through life and then die. Death is certain. Nobody can escape death. But we can definitely believe in a Power as we live. We have a choice to believe in

God, to pray and to start our journey on the Ladder to Heaven.

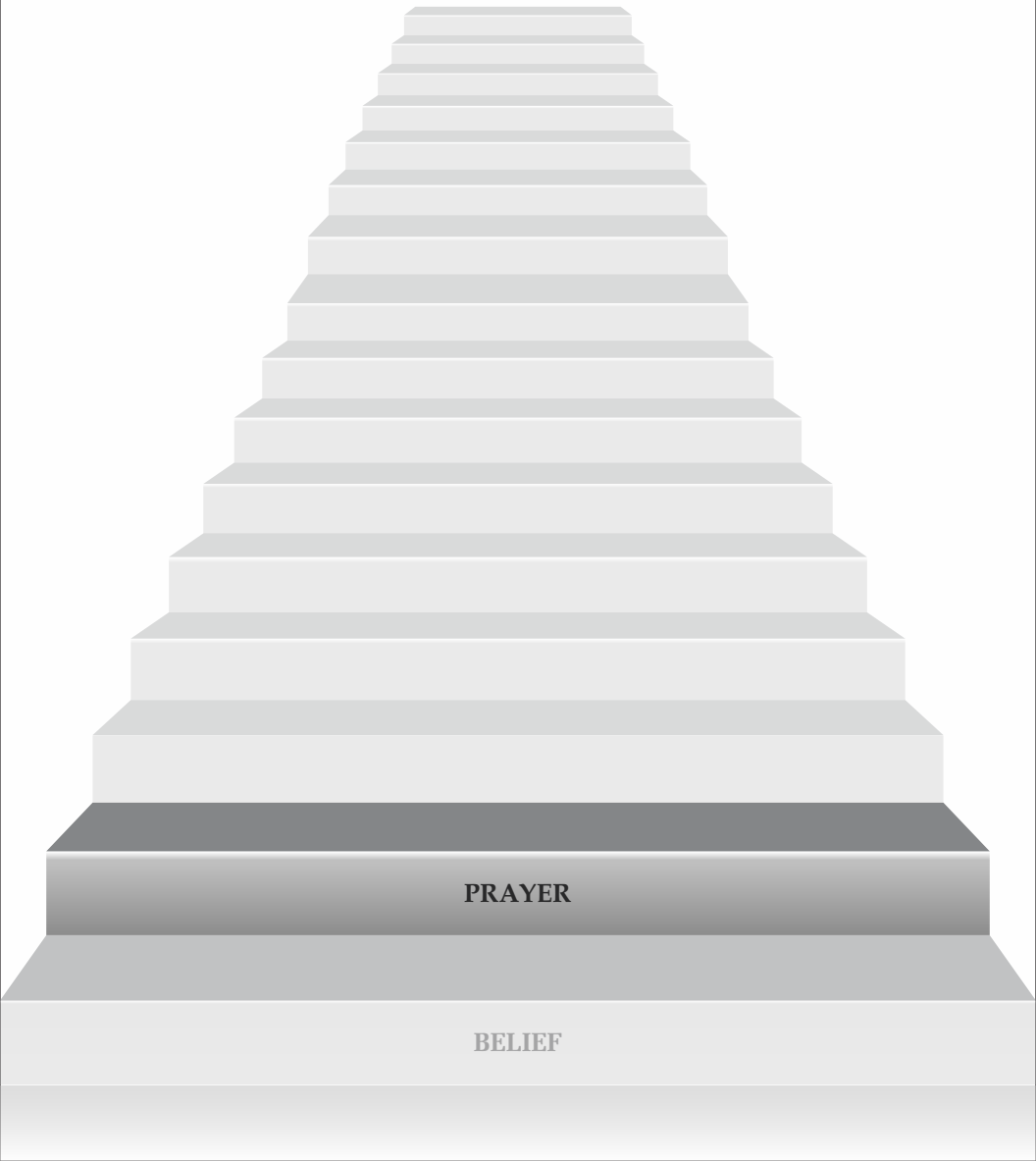
Belief
TAKEAWAYS

- ***The 1st step on the Ladder to Heaven is Belief.***
- ***As we grow up, we all have a choice to believe or not to believe.***
- ***Unfortunately, some people become atheists—those who don't believe in God and some agnostics—those who are not sure about the existence of God.***
- ***When we are born, we do not have a choice. We grow up, depending on our surroundings, our family, our school and our friends. This influences our belief in God.***
- ***This entire universe did not come into existence from nowhere. We should know that a Power exists—a Power we call God.***
- ***Believers who start their Spiritual journey make prayer a part of their daily life.***

STEP 2

Prayer

**“Prayer is a two-way communication with God,
More important than talking, it is listening to our Lord.”**



Why do people Pray? People pray primarily for two reasons. First, as an appeal to God to solve their problems. Second, they call out to God to fulfill their dreams and wishes. There are a few people who pray out of gratitude, and still fewer who express their love for God through prayer. Nevertheless, a large majority of the world prays to God, some every day and many once a week.

While so many of us pray, not many of us try to understand what prayer truly is. Most of us think that it is just talking to God. Therefore, we do not remain silent in order to listen to God's voice. Effective prayer is a two-way communication.

What does prayer demonstrate? It shows our faith in God. We pray because we believe that God will fulfill whatever we ask in prayer. In fact, most people grow in faith as they see their prayers being answered.

There are different types of prayer. The first level of prayer and the most common one is the prayer that takes us to our religious institution or to the altar in our homes and involves body and mind. The second type of prayer is a prayer that just involves our voice. It is singing of hymns, *mantras*, *bhajans* or *qawwalis*, as the case may be. The body may be still, but the mind and the voice are connected to God. However, the most effective form of prayer is said to

be prayer in silence. It is shutting off the body and mind from the world and contemplating God. This prayer is said to be the most difficult and the most effective form of prayer. It doesn't matter what type of prayer we perform as long as we genuinely connect with God in our prayers.

Unfortunately, a large chunk of humanity does not understand the true meaning of prayer. People usually just follow certain rituals and superstitions, and the more complicated the rituals seem to be, the more convinced people are about the efficacy of the prayer. This, however, is not true! We must know what we say when we pray. If we don't, then, we actually don't pray, we just bray!

True prayer is the second step on the Ladder to Heaven. While the first step is believing in God, it is not enough just to believe. We must communicate our feelings to God. Does God listen to our prayers? Of course, he does! As long as our prayers are sincere and genuine, they catch the attention of theAlmighty and he answers our prayers.

And then there are times when prayer becomes the first step and belief follows. A young child doesn't know why he is praying, but it’s these very prayers that can lead the child to become a believer.

In the world today, there is a lot of drama regarding prayers. Every religion tries to proclaim that its prayers are most powerful, just as their God is! Instead of people respecting each other's religion, prayers have become competitive, with each community trying to evangelize and convert people to follow their theology and join them in praying to their God. This type of prayer is not what we are referring to. Prayers that take us forward in our journey to God are genuine, heartfelt expressions of our love for God. We share everything with our God when we communicate in prayer. Very few people are lucky to stop and find out whom they are actually praying to. They are the ones whose prayers are most effective. It is these people who climb the Ladder to Heaven because effective prayer makes them grow in their faith and belief in God.

If prayer is just a formality and rituals are followed just out of habit, it may not take us upward and Godward. It is only when we pray because of our staunch belief and our unconditional faith, that we will progress on the journey towards the Divine.

If we Pray, but we don't know what we say,
Then we don't Pray, we just bray!

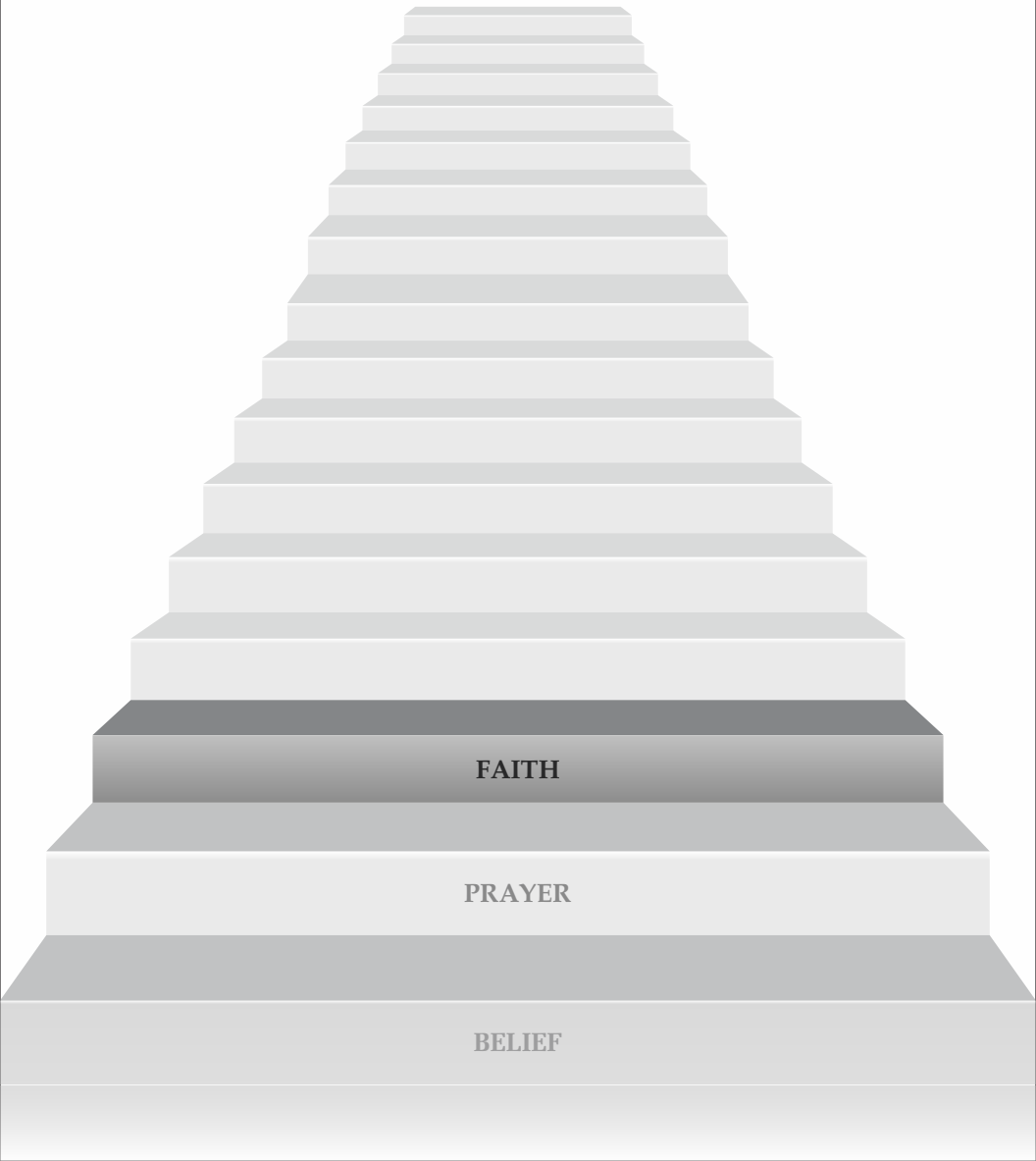
Prayer
TAKEAWAYS

- *The 2nd step on the Ladder to Heaven is Prayer.*
- *Those who believe in God pray and connect to God.*
- *There are 3 kinds of prayer. The most effective is silent prayer.*
- *Prayer is a two-way communication with God, not just talking to God but also listening to him.*
- *Prayer makes us build our faith in God.*

STEP 3

Faith

**“We can do very little with Faith,
But we can do nothing without it.”**



What is FAITH? It is

F - FULL
A - ASSURANCE
I - IN
T - THE
H - HEART

While many people believe in God and even pray, not all of them truly have faith. What is the difference?

There are millions of people around the world who may go to their church, mosque or temple. They may even believe in their God and mumble some prayers. But not all of them are confident that their prayers will be answered. The ones who have faith are undoubtedly confident in their expectations being fulfilled. They don't just believe in their God. They have faith! This faith is the third step towards reaching destination—Heaven.

As we live, it is common for us to experience both joy and sorrow. Sometimes good things happen to us, just as we also face tragedies in our life. It is common for people to lose faith in God when disasters strike. In the beginning, these very fears and dangers cause us to pray. But when our prayers are not answered, we can lose faith in God.

The ones who have faith believe in their God despite the

tragedies that befall them. They know that God is good, and he will take care of them eventually. Whatever happens, the believers who live with faith think that their God will never let them down. What does the one who has faith say to himself?

When the idea is not right, God says "NO!"
When the time is not right, God says "SLOW!"
When we are not ready, God says "GROW!"
When everything is ready, God says "GO!"

They continue praying to God and they await the magical moment when their prayers will be answered. Their faith is unshakeable and so is their belief and they pray consistently, no matter what. They are the ones who climb the Ladder to Heaven, step by step.

What is the enemy of faith? It is doubt. When negative emotions overtake a believer, these emotions can poison the life of believers and eat into their faith. Doubt can destroy both our faith and our journey to God. A believer who has true faith, eliminates doubt and lives with hope. Just like little birds grow up, the faith in believers also has a **nesting phase**, a phase that makes people believe in God and his commandments. Whatever scripture or religion they believe in, people who grow up to be believers,

unconditionally accept the word of God and make it part of their life philosophy.

Life is a merry-go-round and we pass both happiness and unhappiness as we live. However, those who genuinely love God and believe in the power of the Divine do not let their faith waiver. They pass through the **testing phase** of life. It is a phase that puts their faith to test. Despite their prayers, suffering strikes them. It tests them and the ones who are weak, fall prey to doubt in the testing phase of life.

Then, there comes the **arresting phase**, a phase which provokes a believer who has faith to give up on God. Circumstances in life are so dismal, that although they have faith, the arresting phase destroys it. Only those whose faith is strong and unshakeable conquer the testing and arresting phase through their faith. They live life with what they consider the **investing phase**. They invest their time, their energy, and their faith through devout prayer with the belief that they will reach the **cresting phase**. The cresting phase is the phase that crosses all the other phases - the nesting phase, the testing phase, the arresting phase, the investing phase, and finally we are crowned with the reward of the Lord. We are blessed with the Divine grace - the love of God which comes from our faith in the Divine.

Where have you reached in your life? Are you a true believer in God? Do you effectively pray and communicate with the Divine? Do you live with faith or doubt? This will determine whether you are climbing the Ladder to Heaven. If you have Full Assurance In The Heart, then you will move from the third step to the next step as you climb upwards and Godwards. The next step is hope.

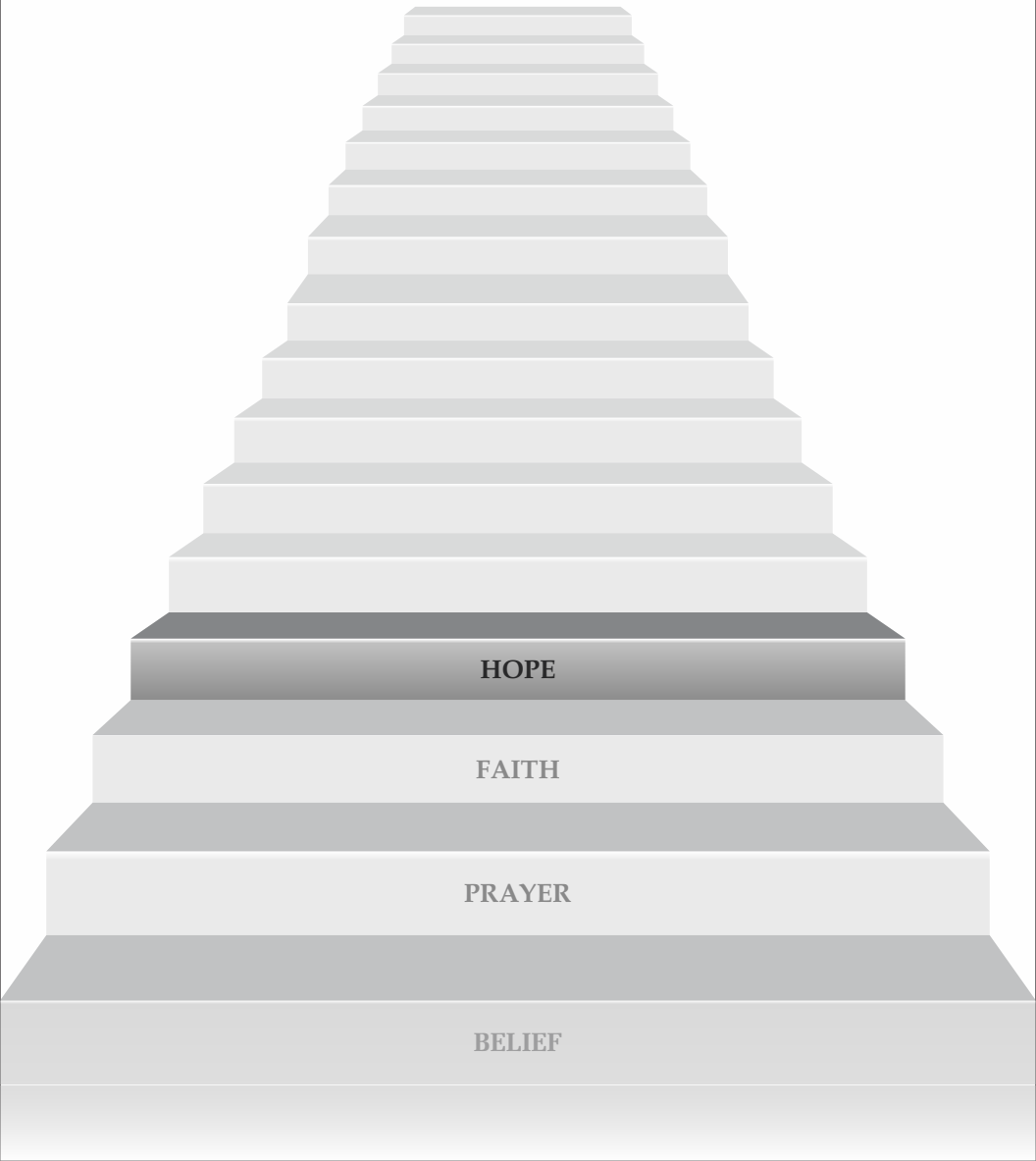
Faith
TAKEAWAYS

- ***The 3rd step on the Ladder to Heaven is Faith.***
- ***FAITH is Full Assurance In The Heart.***
- ***It is not just believing and praying, but being confident about the power of God.***
- ***Those who have faith eliminate doubt from their life.***
- ***Faith builds a strong foundation in our relationship with God.***

STEP 4

Hope

“When Believers Pray with Faith, Hope is born.”



Why do we often call some people 'hopeless?' It is because without hope life becomes useless. Hope is what gives meaning and purpose to life. What is HOPE? It is …

H – Having
O – Only
P – Positive
E – Expectations

The ones who move forward on their journey towards God do not let negative emotions enter their life. Such people realize that belief in God is all about being positive. Their faith fills their life with positive emotions like courage, confidence, optimism, love, forgiveness, compassion, and trust. All these positive emotions fill their life with the power of enthusiasm. They eliminate all negative emotions that create poison in their life. Those who live with hope destroy fear, worry, stress, anxiety, anger, hate, revenge and pessimism. They have climbed the fourth rung on the Ladder to Heaven and they are staunch believers in God's powers. Not only do they believe in God and pray, but their unshakeable, invincible faith leads them to a state of optimism that makes them seem completely confident about their God.

Their hope creates magic in their life. They dream big and think, “With God all things are possible.” In fact, most

people whose life is full of hope, eliminate 'impossible' from their vocabulary. Even when things seem impossible, their belief in God is such that they believe a miracle from God will make it possible. Hope has tremendous power. People with hope are able to cope and overcome all problems and challenges. When they reach the end of the rope, they don't lose hope. They just hang on and it is their faith that takes them through the biggest challenges that they face.

Compare these people with people who have no hope. They become truly hopeless people. What are such people capable of doing? Such people reach nowhere. When they reach the end of the road, they just stop. But people with hope move forward. They know that with faith and hope, the end of the road will become a bend in the road and where there seems to be no way forward, a new way will appear. People with hope are able to overcome all the challenges of their life.

Sheela believed in God. She used to pray every day. But her prayers were weak and without conviction. In fact, she used to tell God – "I really don't know whether you will answer my prayers or not!" On one hand, she believed that God existed. But on the other, she did not understand the power of the Divine. Her faith was weak, and she had both positive and negative emotions that

filled her life alternatively. She never got what she wanted in life and she concluded that God didn't love her. Her friend Radha was quite different. Although her life had problems, she thanked God and accepted his Divine will. She believed unconditionally in the power of the Divine and her communication to God was very affirmative. "Oh Lord, I trust you," she would pray. "You are everything, I am nothing! My problems may seem like mountains to me, but if thou wishes, you can wipe out my problems. I pray and I beg thee to take away these tragedies from my life. Fill my life with peace and happiness. I believe without a doubt that you will make it happen. Thank you, Lord!" Radha was more miserable than Sheela, but her belief, her faith, and her hope made her cope with her problems. Her relationship with the Divine was strong and her prayers worked. Sheela continued to struggle because she did not trust in the Divine. Her negative reactions only caused her to slip down the Ladder rather than climb up.

The choice is ours. We can choose to live like Sheela or Radha. We can live with hope or live hopelessly. If we believe in God, have faith and live with hope, then we will trust the Divine and move up on the Ladder to Heaven.

Hope gives us what is known as 'the never give up attitude.' Have you ever seen a stonecutter hammering a rock with his tools? With all his might, he gives it a blow. Nothing happens! Then he gives it another blow but the rock remains

still. Ten blows, twenty blows, fifty blows, and the rock refuses to give in. Finally, after many more blows, the rock breaks into two and the stone cutter knows that it was not that last blow that did it, but all that went before. He knows it was not just his effort, but his faith and his hope that split the rock apart. We human beings sometimes give up. Our belief breaks apart when our faith and our hope is not strong enough. We don't move forward in our relationship with God. We are unable to trust the Divine and we do not climb the Ladder to Heaven. Even though we may have climbed a few steps, we just stop. We live and we die without going up in the sky! If only we trusted the Divine, we would continue climbing the Ladder to Heaven.

Hope is not pretending that there is never any sorrow,
It's the knowledge that our troubles will be overcome tomorrow.
It's an inner strength that we call on to sustain us now and then,
Till our problems lie behind us and we are happy once again.

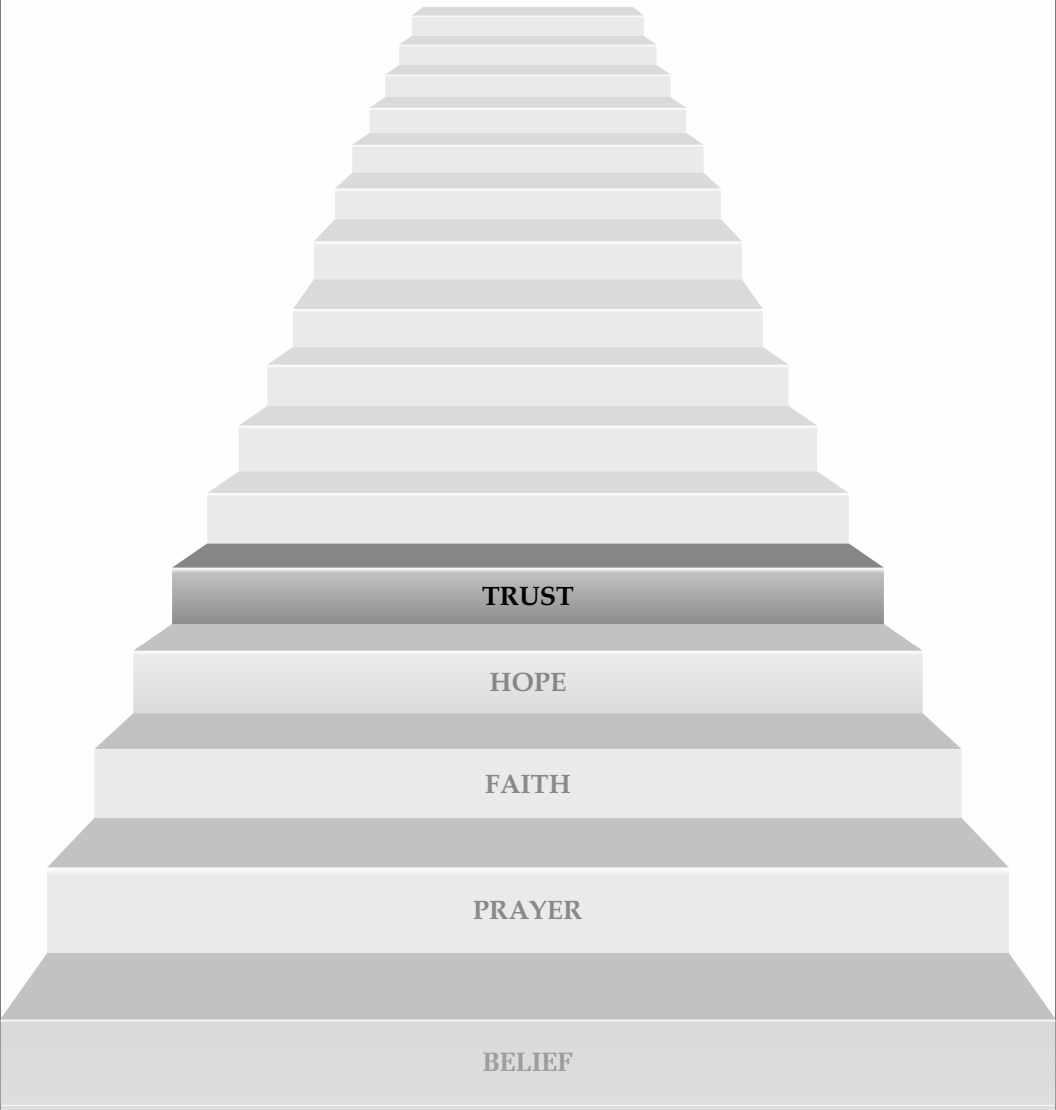
Hope
TAKEAWAYS

- *The 4th step on the Ladder to Heaven is Hope.*
- *Hope is Having Only Positive Expectations.*
- *People who live without hope become hopeless or useless.*
- *Those who live with hope live with positive emotions like courage, confidence, optimism, love, forgiveness, compassion, and trust that makes them cope with all challenges of life.*
- *They also eliminate all negative emotions like fear, worry, stress, anxiety, anger, hate, revenge and pessimism and move forward in their spiritual journey.*
- *When we believe and pray with faith and hope, we move forward towards realizing God.*

STEP 5

Trust

“When you Trust God with your problems, You just forget about them!”



What takes us to the next step on the Ladder to Heaven? It is TRUST.

T – Total
R – Reliance
U – Unconditional
S – Surrender
T - To the Almighty

Trust doesn't come with mere words; it comes with deeds. Believers who don't doubt the existence of God start their journey to God. Then they take a leap of faith to go forward. Not only do they pray effectively and communicate regularly with God, but they also live with hope, eliminating all kinds of negativity in their life. Subsequently, they arrive at the next step.

They trust God! They surrender their life to the Almighty. They accept the Divine will without question. They rely on the Divine for anything and everything in their life. Such is the life of one who climbs the Ladder and reaches the pedestal of trust.

What is unique in trusting God? I once asked a believer, "How much do you trust God?" He replied, "I trust God 99.9%." I then told him, "That means you don't trust God, because trust is about total reliance. It is about unconditional surrender. The moment we doubt God, even 0.1%, it only shows that we don't trust God!"

What creates trust in a believer? When a believer lives his life with God, he makes God a part of his life. His faith in God is such that there is not an iota of doubt. Therefore, he hopes without hesitation and his trust is absolute.

What is the difference between such a believer and an ordinary man? Such a believer builds his life on a rock of faith and trust. The biggest challenges of life attack him like the waves of an angry sea, like storms, hurricanes, and tornadoes, but he lives peacefully and safely in a house that is firmly built on a foundation of belief in God. An ordinary man builds his life on the sands of hesitation. Even the slightest problem sweeps his happiness away and makes him drown in sorrow and misery. Therefore, those who are climbing the Ladder to Heaven, enjoy the benefits of God's presence at every step that they live. The further they climb the Ladder, the stronger their relationship with the Divine becomes and the happier their life turns.

If I look back at my life, I lived a life of unconditional faith and total surrender. I didn't doubt God ever, no matter what circumstances unfolded in my life. For 40 years, each day of my life started and ended with prayer. My belief in God was unshakeable. There were many problems that came in my life, but they could not break my faith because I trusted God completely. I knew that God was in charge and

I used to always utter the words – "Thy Will be done, Oh Lord. Not mine!" Not only did I climb this Ladder, not only did I believe and pray, not only did I have faith, hope and trust, but I also moved forward on my journey with God with the grace of my Spiritual Master who guided me at every step and helped me strengthen my relationship with God.

We all have a choice. We can choose to believe or not to believe. If we do believe, then we move forward in our journey with God. But if we don't believe in God, then who do we go to in times of distress and turmoil? It's up to us to pray or not. But if we don't pray, then with whom will we communicate our heartaches and pain? From whom will we seek miracles that will make the impossible possible? We have a choice to live with faith or to doubt. But if we doubt, how will it benefit us? It will only fill our life with negative emotions like fear, worry, and anxiety and make us miserable. We have a choice. We can choose to live with trust by preferring hope over hopelessness. What benefits a man to live a hopeless life? Even in the worst of times, it is hope that creates inspiration in us that makes us work harder and pray for things to happen in the right direction. We have a choice to trust or not to trust. But if we don't trust, then whom can we rely on? To whom can we surrender our life?

Man is intelligent enough to understand that God exists. While we do not know who God is, where God is or what God is, we know that God is! It is for us to live our life believing in God, praying to God, having faith, hope, and trust. When we climb these 5 steps on the Ladder of Spirituality, then we arrive at the next step which makes our life full of bliss and joy. What is the next step?

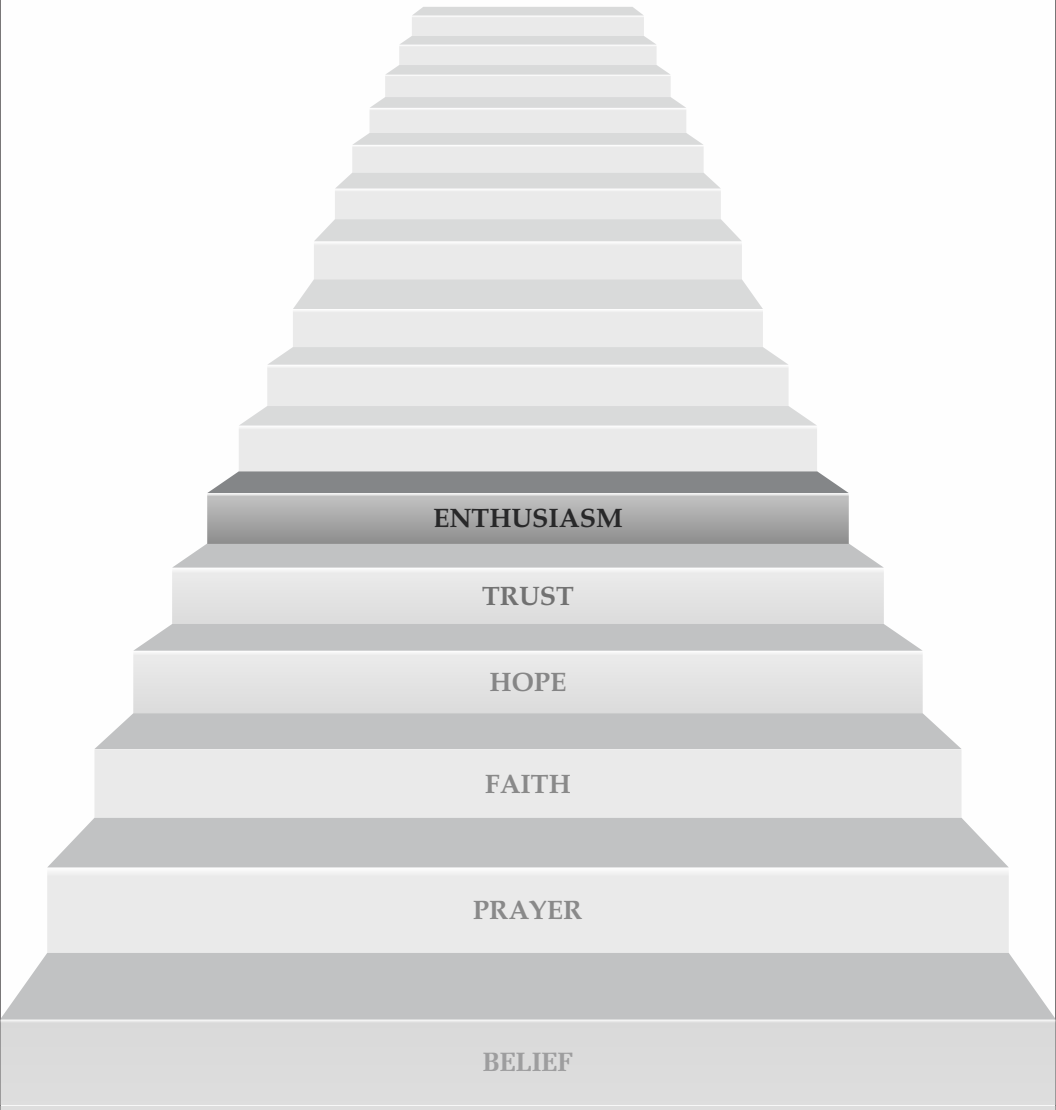
Trust
TAKEAWAYS

- ***The 5th step on the Ladder to Heaven is Trust.***
- ***TRUST is Total Reliance, Unconditional Surrender To the Almighty.***
- ***Trust is always 100%. We cannot trust God 99.9%.***
- ***Trust is about accepting the Divine will, just as it is being able to surrender unconditionally to the will of God.***
- ***When we live with faith, hope, and trust, our life becomes as strong as an iron pillar.***

STEP 6

Enthusiasm

“Most of us don't know that Enthusiasm is the God Power that comes from the God within.”



The next step on the Ladder to Heaven is Enthusiasm. We all know what enthusiasm means. It is an emotion that makes a person joyous and happy. Enthusiasm appears in a person as excitement that flows in all their deeds. While we all like to be enthusiastic, do we know what enthusiasm truly means?

Enthusiasm comes from the Greek word '*Entheos*' which literally means '*En*' – in and '*theos*' – God. Therefore, '*Entheos*' means having faith in God, hope in God, and trust in God. Those who are enthusiastic, fill their life with God's Divine presence. Peace and joy fill their life as they accept the Divine will and surrender to whatever happens in life.

When we climb to the 6th step on the Ladder called Enthusiasm, we experience God's Divine presence in everything that happens. We know that God has not only created this universe but also manages it moment by moment. Nothing happens in this world without God permitting it to happen. God controls this universe with his Divine laws. For instance, there is the Law of Cycles. This ensures that everything in this world happens in a cyclic manner like the cycle of the seasons and the cycle of day and night. Then there is the Law of Action and Reaction which ensures that our present actions will determine our future, just as our past actions determine our present

circumstances. Similarly, there is the Law of Gravity. Because things that are thrown up, get drawn down to the earth, we infer that the Law of Gravity exists. People with enthusiasm believe in God's Divine Laws and accept the will of God with zeal.

Enthusiasm is a source of optimism, just as it makes a person's life bloom with joy, peace, and love. Those who have climbed this 6th step have already crossed the first five steps of belief, prayer, faith, hope, and trust. Along with enthusiasm, they have laid a strong foundation on which their life is built. Nothing can shake them, nothing can cause them to fall apart. Even the biggest tragedy seems to go by without really affecting them because they are true believers in God.

What are the attributes of a person who has reached the 6th step on the Ladder? They live powerful lives because they live 'prayerful' lives. They smile and they laugh, in both good times as well as tough times. They live with the philosophy – *"Tough times never last, but tough people do."* They know that *"God's delays are never God's denials."* They know that God has the last word in every matter and that it will be good. They live with faith just as they eliminate doubt from their lives and trust God.

Those who come up to the 6th step, accept the Divine will. They live moment by moment considering each moment as a gift from the Divine. They don't swing to a past that is gone and then, to a future not yet born. Whatever has happened is over. They don't nurse it, curse it or rehearse it. They use their enthusiasm to reverse it. Instead of living in the future with fear, they live moment by moment with faith. They know that FEAR is False Expectations Appearing Real and that their faith, is stronger than their fear. Their fears are not their real dangers and if ever a danger arrives, they trust that God will give them courage to face it. Such is the life of those who have climbed the six steps to God.

My life, from the day I can remember, has been filled with enthusiasm. I have always lived with faith in God, trust, and hope and this fills my life with an ocean of enthusiasm. Of course, I have had tough times in life. But my faith has given me the energy and the courage to defeat every problem. I have always told myself, *"If God is for us, then who can be against us."* My enthusiasm was contagious and it flowed to all those who surrounded me. As I lived a life of complete surrender and acceptance, God filled my life with success and happiness. Whatever I touched seemed to turn to gold.

Enthusiasm created power in my life that made it seem that I was invincible. Not only did my enthusiasm give me the power to make all dreams come true, it also propelled me from peak to peak. It was enthusiasm that was creating all the magic.

I was fearless because I believed, “Nothing can happen tomorrow that God and I can't handle together.” I used to dream big dreams and God made every dream come true. I used to try with faith and toil and my Lord used to convert every 'try' into a 'triumph'. I knew all along that I was doing nothing, my Lord was doing it through me. My enthusiasm led me to live a devout life and I shared my success and wealth with God, serving humanity that was suffering on the streets. I used to reach out to the poorest of the poor and serve them knowing that each of them was an image of God. To serve them was to worship God. My life evolved and I grew climbing both the Ladder of success and the Ladder of faith. I knew that with God, all things are possible!

Where did my enthusiasm take me? What did my faith, hope, and trust lead to? They created a Divine connection with God as I climbed the next step on the Ladder.

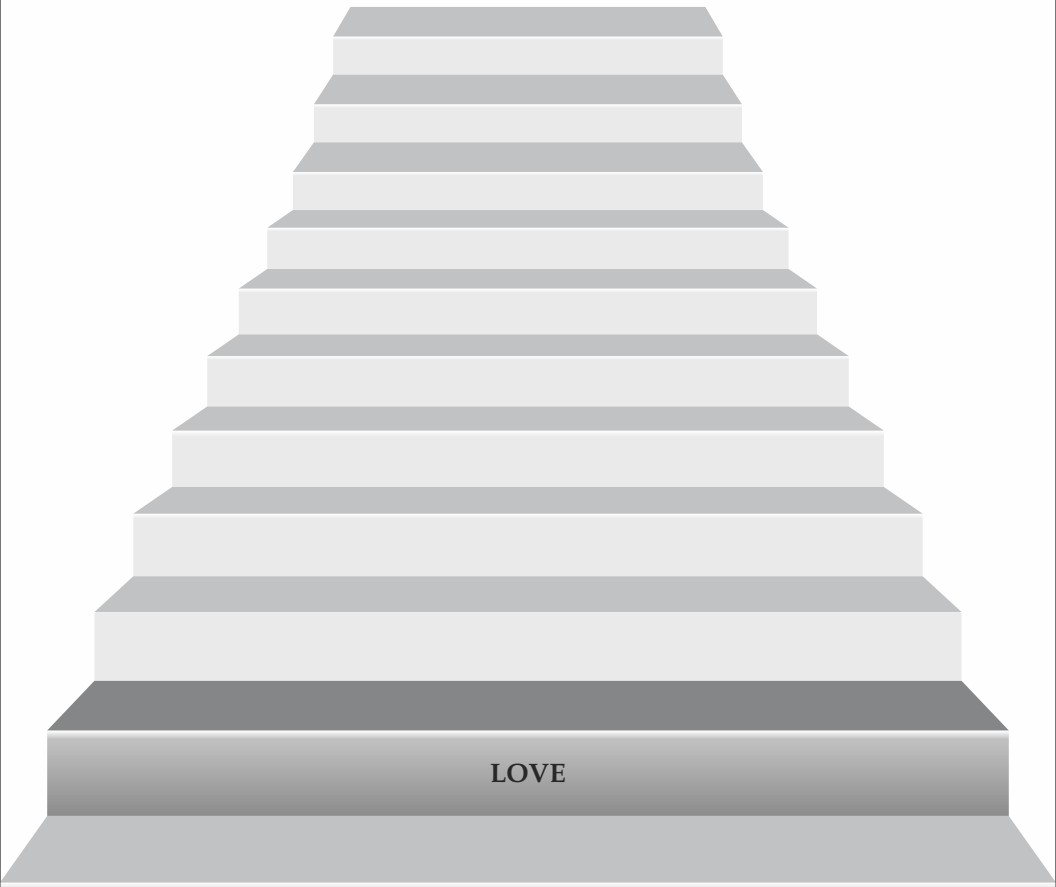
Enthusiasm
TAKEAWAYS

- *The 6th step on the Ladder to Heaven is Enthusiasm.*
- *It comes from the Greek word 'Entheos' which literally means 'En' – in and 'theos' – God—believing in God, having faith in God, and trusting God.*
- *One who lives with enthusiasm lives with a power that is Divine.*
- *Those with enthusiasm have energy that sets them apart from others.*
- *Enthusiasm propels us on our journey to God and pushes us forward on the Ladder to Heaven.*

STEP 7

Love

**“When you Love God with all your heart,
You break all barriers on the way to heaven.”**



BELIEF PRAYER FAITH

HOPE TRUST ENTHUSIASM

The 7th step on the Ladder to Heaven is Love. Unless we love God, we cannot climb further on the Ladder to Heaven. We may live with faith and hope, with trust and enthusiasm, but it is love that finally takes us forward in our journey to God. In the beginning, our love for God appears in our prayers. But if we are truly passionate about God, if we are obsessed about God, then we will go in search of our God.

How does one experience this Divine love for God? One's love for God is so deep and genuine that one seeks nothing else but God. One only seeks God and ultimately finds God. It is not easy to experience this love for God, but those who go on a quest and realize the truth, experience this Divine love. They go beyond the common understanding of love and see love as a Divine fountain of joy and peace that flows from God.

When we live our life crossing the 6 steps on the Ladder to the Divine, we become passionate about God, we seek God, but how can we attain God? The love for God leads the true lovers of God to go on a quest and realize God. There are times when it is not love for God, but a quest for God that takes us forward in our search and when we realize God, we experience a deep love for God. It is this love that takes us forward on the Ladder to Heaven.

The fact is that love is Divine. That is why a dead body cannot love. It is the Soul inside us that truly loves. Who does the Soul love? In reality, it loves other Souls because the Soul to Soul connection is Divine. But this is unknown to man. Thus we don't discover the true meaning of love and realize that love is Divine.

We human beings do not realize the true meaning of love. The truth is that God is the source of love, the fountain of true love. It is Divine love in our Soul that manifests as love that we see in the world. Just like Divine white light from the sun splits through raindrops to produce a rainbow with seven beautiful colours, Divine love from the Soul appears as love from the time we are born till we die. To understand the seven colours of love that flow from Divine love, we can relate them to the seven colours of the rainbow – VIBGYOR. Violet love is love between a child and its parents. It's a beautiful love and it lasts throughout life. Indigo love is love between two friends. Don't we all remember those days when we loved our best friends in our school so much? As we grow up, we all experience Blue romantic love. We also experience Green love which is love for ourselves. There is no human being who does not love himself. This self-love creates self-esteem and self-respect but at the same time, it can also result in ego. Then there is Yellow intellectual love and Orange emotional love. Finally, there is Red erotic love

that is famous all around the world. All these manifestations of love emanate from the Divine but we are ignorant of this truth.

When will humanity realize that the 7 colours of love are inadvertently the love within us loving the Divine? If only we realize this and overcome the ignorance about love, the gift of love that is in each one of us will passionately propel us to heaven.

There are several ways to love God. One such way is to serve suffering humanity. When we realize that God lives in each Soul, we go beyond the surface, beyond the outward appearance of the ones who suffer. We live with the philosophy- 'serving humanity is prayer'. We realize that the only way to love God is to love every man and animal that comes our way. Those who love God experience God loving them in return, whether it is a dog wagging its tail or love from near and dear ones - they experience God's love every day that they live.

How does one measure their love for God? It is said that to truly love God, one must live with a triple yearning - the yearning that a miser has for gold, the yearning that a lover has for his beloved and the yearning that a little child has for its mother that it has just lost. If one has this triple

yearning for God, then it is considered that their love for God is ultimate and they will realize God. However, for one to realize God, one must go on a quest. One must search for God. One must ask questions that will ultimately make them realize the truth about God.

This 7th step on the Ladder to Heaven is the turning point. Some people live their life loving God as they believe in God with faith, hope, and trust. But they don't go beyond. They live religious lives but end their life just loving God. They don't search for God, seek God and thus they don't realize God. Only the true seekers of God go on a quest and realize that God lives in the temple of their heart. They make God-realization a priority of their life. They don't live a life that is filled with rituals and superstitions. Their love for God is so deep that they make this an obsession and they passionately seek God.

True love is Divine,
It is a fountain of joy.
We can love God by loving all the manifestations of God.

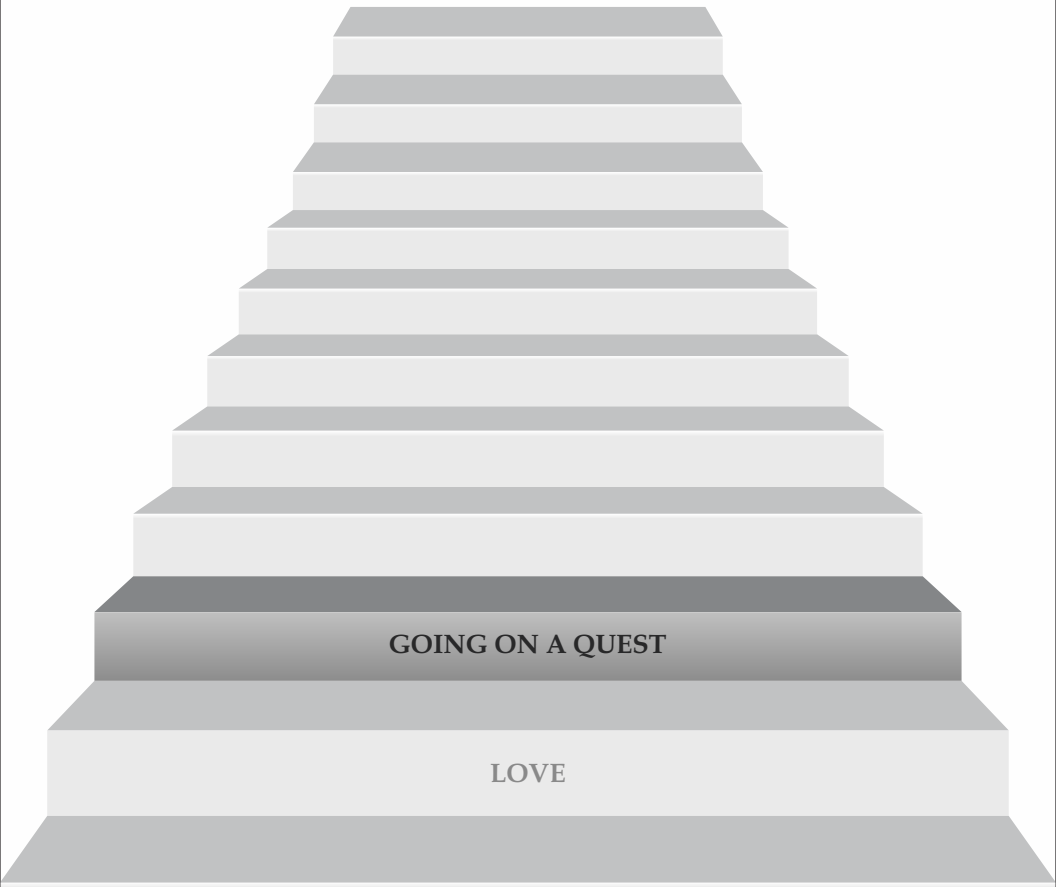
Love
TAKEAWAYS

- *The 7th step on the Ladder to Heaven is Love for God.*
- *Unless we truly love God, we will not seek God and move forward on our Spiritual journey.*
- *Love for God manifests as love for his creation.*
- *True love is bliss, not just a kiss. It is Divine love that manifests as the love that appears as 7 colours of the rainbow.*
- *Those who truly love God, serve suffering humanity as they consider each person as an image of God. To serve humanity is nothing but an expression of our love for God.*
- *It is love for God that leads us forward on a quest for the Divine.*
- *Steps one to seven won't take us to heaven. We must continue to climb on upward and forward.*

STEP 8

Going on a Quest

"It's not enough to do our Best,
And then to rest.
If we want God, we must Go on a Quest."



While climbing the Ladder to the Divine, we must remember that steps one to seven won't take us to heaven. These are only the basic steps that form the prerequisites for realizing God.

Most people do not realize the truth about God because they get stuck in the kindergarten of religion. All religions are good, but they only teach us the basics about God. They teach us to pray, to believe. We follow the scriptures, but we go round and round in circles till our journey of life is over. Very few people climb the 8th step on the Ladder to Heaven. Those who go on a Spiritual Quest, evolve from the kindergarten of religion and graduate in the university of Spirituality. It is these people who ultimately realize God as they go forward climbing the Ladder and reach destination heaven.

What is this quest all about? When I was 46 years old, my Guru and Spiritual Master advised me to go on a *Talaash*, a search for the Divine. He told me that my life was filled with pleasure and peace, but there was no purpose. He asked me to evolve from the peaks of achievement and fulfillment to the ultimate peak of Enlightenment. He provoked me to search for the Truth, to overcome ignorance, and to achieve the state of self-realization. To me, all this was Greek and Latin. But just as I had love for

God, I had great respect and reverence for my Guru. I set out on a quest to find the ultimate purpose of life. I put together 9 questions that I wanted to find answers to, as I attempted to realize the truth.

The 9 questions were:

1. We all believe in God. What is the reality? Who is God? Where is God? What is God?

2. Most people believe in heaven or hell but where are they located? Can we go there?

3. We all know how a child is conceived and born, but how is a life created in the womb?

4. What happens after death? The body dies but what happens to the one who was alive?

5. Does the Law of Karma actually exist? A law that states that the actions of this life will be the cause of our rebirth.

6. Is rebirth or reincarnation real? Are we really reborn after we die?

7. We talk of a Soul. But what exactly is the Soul?

8. What is the purpose of life for us human beings who live on earth?

9. What is Enlightenment, Salvation, Liberation, *Mukti, Moksha or Nirvana*? All religions talk of this being our Ultimate Goal, but what exactly is this?

As I wanted to climb the Ladder to Heaven, the 8th step called for me to find answers. I took a sabbatical from my work and went into the mountains on a Spiritual retreat to realize the truth. I carried books from every possible religion and along with the scriptures took with me the philosophy of the sages and saints known to the world.

My quest inspired me to find answers to the 9 questions because this would not only make me realize the true purpose of life, but it would also lead me to self-realization and God-realization. My Master also explained to me that it was the realization of the truth that would help me overcome ignorance and liberate me from all suffering that I experienced. Inspired to find the secret of ultimate happiness, and the true meaning and purpose of life, I continued my search, although I was not getting anywhere.

I did not want to be amongst those who just lived with faith but did not realize the truth about God. I knew that 'God is

not a statue, God is not a saint, God is not a picture that anyone can paint'. God is a Power, a Power beyond human comprehension and I wanted to discover this Power.

I was determined to get answers to these 9 questions because my Guru told me that this was the way to go forward and towards God. He used to always inspire me to go onward, forward, upward, inward and Godward. As I went on the quest, I was attacked by my biggest enemy – my own Mind and Ego – ME. It stopped me from realizing the Truth of who I was and why I was here. Later in life, I realized why the Mind and Ego – the ME fights so much and resists and prevents the realization of the truth. Once the Truth is realized, it destroys the very existence of the Mind and the Ego! It was my Guru, my mentor who guided me to climb the next step, the 9th step that helped me to realize the Truth.

A quest starts our real Journey to God.
It challenges all the myths and helps us to
realize the truth that takes us to our Lord.

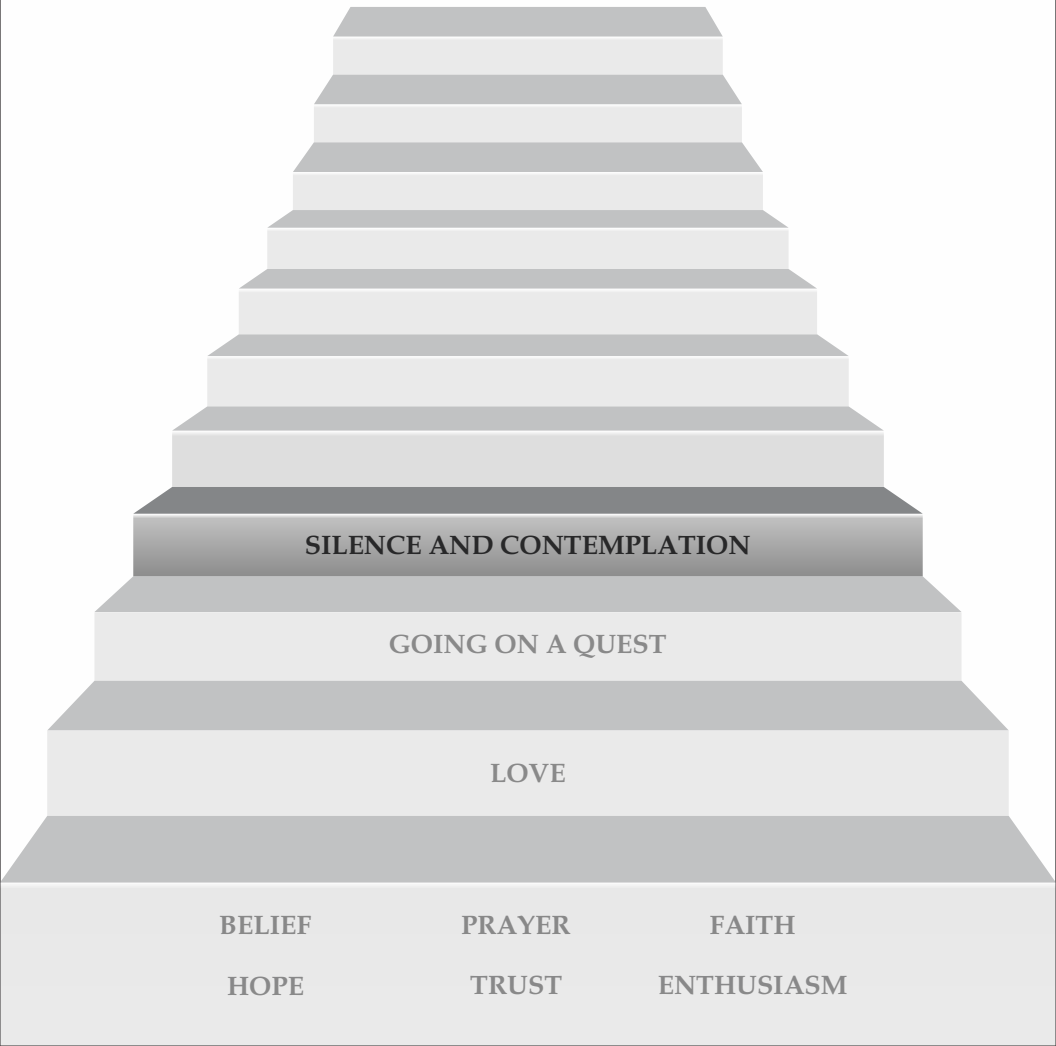
Going on a Quest
TAKEAWAYS

- *The 8th step on the Ladder to Heaven is Going on a Quest.*
- *What is a quest? It is going in search to find the true meaning of who God is, where God is and what God is.*
- *Everybody talks of heaven and hell. It is our quest that makes us realize the truth.*
- *It is the quest that makes us realize the truth about the Soul and about life, death, and rebirth.*
- *It is the quest that leads us to the Ultimate Goal of Realization, Liberation, and Unification as it helps us overcome our ignorance.*

STEP 9

Silence and Contemplation

**“Some people think Silence is nothing…
But those who Discover the Secret,
Realize that Silence is Everything!”**



What is the way to realize God? Is it enough to believe in God and offer prayers to him with faith, hope, trust, and love? No! Unless our enthusiasm drives us to go on a quest, we can never realize God. What is it that stops us from our quest, from our realization?

We human beings are slaves to our own senses. The 5 sense organs – ears, eyes, nose, tongue, and skin, constantly trigger our mind to think. The mind is a rascal. Even without the senses, it jumps like a monkey from thought to thought. The mind is said to think a thought practically every second. Therefore, it thinks up to 50 thoughts a minute. This leads to a whopping 50,000 thoughts per day. Because of this constant clutter and murmur of thoughts, we are unable to contemplate the Truth. Further, we get lost in this world or *Samsara*. We live in a blanket of ignorance that is caused by *Maya* or illusion.

This earth is like a humongous stage on which 8 billion people are enacting the drama of the Divine. But it looks very real. Although we know that in the end, the body will die and like actors in any drama, we just come and go after we play our part, somehow, our ignorance makes us believe that all this is true. In reality it is just like a dream, an illusion.

How can we overcome this illusion? How can we realize

the truth? The answer is Silence. The only way to be successful in our quest, to realize the truth and to overcome ignorance is to slow down the pace of our mind. Our mind is like a thought factory. It is like a popcorn machine constantly producing thoughts. Unless we stop this constant production of thoughts, we will never be able to Contemplate and realize the Truth. Although we believe in God, the illusion or *Maya* that is projected in this world, makes the drama or *Leela* look so real.

Silencing the mind leads to two things. First, it creates peace of mind and we don't get carried away by thoughts that become desire, that create attachments and make us sink in ignorance. As our thoughts reduce, our intellect, another domain of the subtle body is activated and helps us discriminate the myth from the truth. It helps us choose right over wrong. It leads us forward on our journey to God. Normally, people believe in rituals and superstitions, but the one who lives with an active intellect, discriminates and moves forward on the journey of truth away from dogmas.

Silence has several benefits. Not only does it create peace as the mind slows down, and not only does it activate the intellect to discriminate, it also helps us live in Yoga, or in Union with the Divine. Normally, we are connected to the world and disconnected from the Divine. Yoga helps us build an active connection with God, just like a good SIM

card is constantly connected to the satellite network.

All this helps us succeed in our quest for the Truth. It helps us overcome the ignorance in which we live, and it leads us on the path to heaven. In my quest or *Talaash*, my Spiritual Master insisted that I spend time in silence. In the beginning, I used to argue with my mentor – "Of what use is it to be silent? How does it benefit me?" My Master had a great sense of humour. On one such occasion, he replied, "Why do you pay your security guard a salary when he sits morning to evening doing nothing in silence?" I said, "Because his job is to watch and catch the thief that might come." "So also," said my Master, "you need to observe and watch in silence for the thief that is making you sink in ignorance. There is a thief who is robbing the Divine from you and because you are not observant, you are not conscious, awake and alert, you are losing the biggest treasure of your life. Stop! Become aware and conscious of who you are. Spend time in silence to realize the truth of '*Neti Neti*' I am not the body, I am not the mind. It is with this that you will realize the Truth that you are indeed the Divine Soul. It is this that will take you forward on the Ladder to Heaven."

Based on my Master's advice, I never missed my daily appointment with God. It was anywhere between 10 to 30

minutes every morning and every evening, preferably at a fixed time. I used to do nothing, just sit in silence and I used to try to listen to God's soft and silent voice. Slowly but surely, I moved further on the journey to God.

It was this silence that made me contemplate what I had read in many books. Reading gave me the knowledge, but it was silence that converted the knowledge into realization of the truth. This led me to the next step on the Ladder to Heaven.

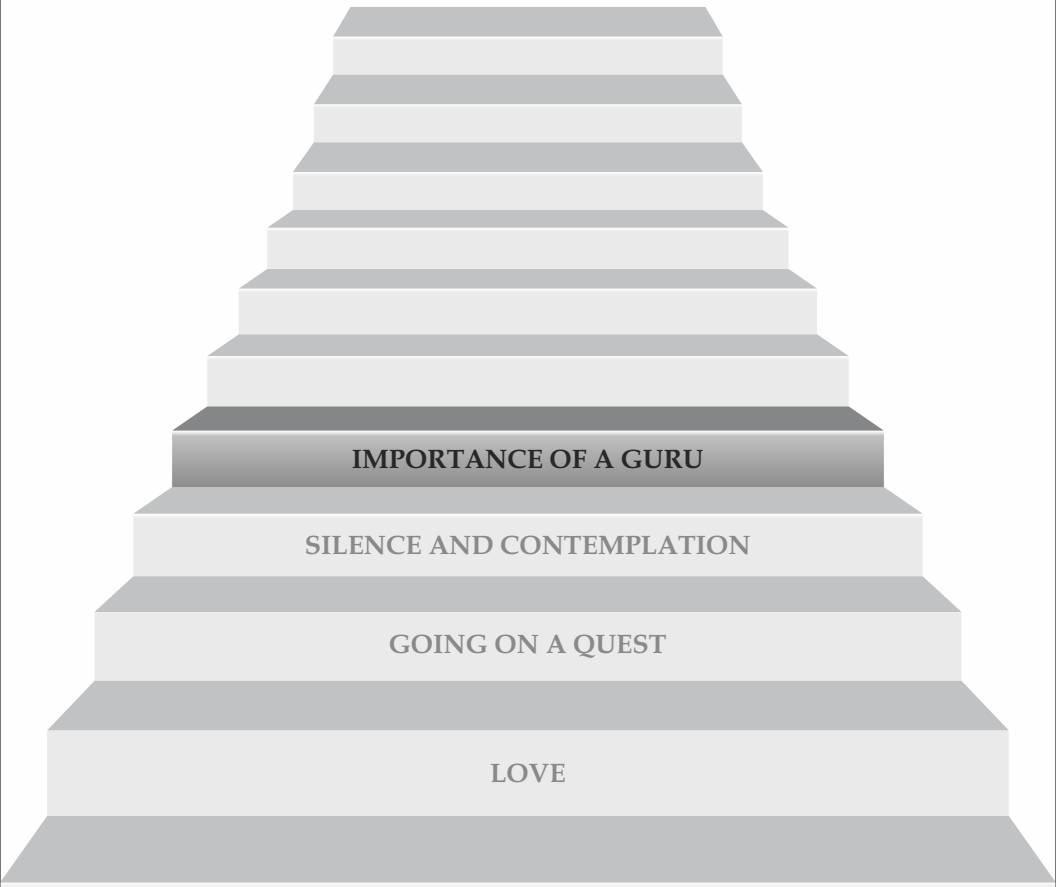
Silence and Contemplation TAKEAWAYS

- ***The 9th step on the Ladder to Heaven is Silence and Contemplation.***
- ***Unless we silence our mind that thinks up to 50,000 thoughts a day, we cannot contemplate the truth.***
- ***Silence helps us build a communication with God.***
- ***It is only with silence that we can listen to God's voice.***
- ***Silence not only creates peace, it also activates the intellect which is an important tool in overcoming ignorance, realizing the truth, and going further on the Ladder to Heaven.***

STEP 10

Importance of a Guru

**“A Guru has already climbed the Ladder to Heaven.
If we sincerely follow him,
there are good chances that we too will get there.”**



I was fortunate to find a Guru when I was 25 years old. A Guru is one who takes his disciple from '*Gu*' to '*Ru*' – from darkness to light. If one is on a Spiritual journey and one is climbing the Ladder to Heaven, one needs a Spiritual coach. Just like we need a coach to teach us anything important in life, it is impossible to evolve Spiritually without a Guru. This is because the subject of God and heaven is not easy to understand. Only a genuine Guru can lead us forward.

How does one find a Guru? When a true believer loves God, the grace of the Divine leads him to a Spiritual Master, a Guru. Age does not matter, and somebody may find a Guru when they are a teenager, and somebody else when they are over 80. It is a well-known saying that 'when the disciple is ready, the Guru will appear'. However, the disciple must be ready in all aspects to find a Guru. Not everybody is fortunate to find a Guru in their lifetime. A Guru is a manifestation of the Divine. He is God on earth. In the ancient days, there were genuine Gurus. But in today's world, anybody may appoint themselves to be a self-proclaimed Guru. One must be very careful not to find a wrong Guru because this may lead them to their Spiritual downfall.

What is the difference between a Guru and a 'genuine' Guru? A genuine Guru seeks nothing from us. He only

wants to lead us forward on the Spiritual path. He has himself climbed the Ladder and has realized the Truth. Normally, a true Guru would himself have a Spiritual Master who has coached him to realize the Truth.

My Master was God's greatest gift to me. His name was J.P. Vaswani, but we used to fondly call him Dada. After traversing the earth for about 100 years, in July 2018, just 20 days before he could turn 100, he left his human form.

Dada coached me for over 25 years. He came into my life while I was busy making money and was a staunch believer in Lord Shiva. He encouraged my faith and helped me grow my relationship with God. For the first 10 years, he guided me on how to live life as an ethical human being, helping me build my belief, my faith, and my hope. Then he encouraged me on my journey of doing humanitarian, inspirational, and religious work. Whenever I had a problem, I would take it to him. To me, he was not just a Spiritual Master but also my life coach. He had a solution to all my problems. Then, one day, he advised me to shut down my business and to move forward in my Spiritual life. I was shocked at first. But I thank God that I followed my mentor's advice. I shut shop and started doing Humanitarian, Inspirational, and Spiritual work that I was passionate about.

Years passed and I lived a blissful life. When my Guru saw that I was happy and content, he provoked me one day and asked me, "Are you just going to live till you die? Or are you going to go on a quest and find out who you are and why you are here? What is your purpose of life?" I was shaken with my Guru's provocation. For 20 years, he had not pushed me to do anything. It was the first time that he had asked me to go on a quest. He called it a *Talaash*. I did not even know the meaning of realization. I had no clue that I was living in ignorance. I was 46 years old and my life had evolved with belief and I had grown with prayer, faith, hope, and trust. When I started my business, there was enthusiasm. It was only when I was 46, that my Master pushed me to go on a quest. He was the one who taught me the importance of silence.

My Guru made me realize that we human beings live in ignorance. While less than 1% of the world is visually blind, 99% of the world is Spiritually blind. He introduced me to the concept of *Maya*, illusion and made me understand that all that was happening around us was nothing but a big Cosmic Drama. Little did I know that finding a Guru is an important step on the Ladder to Heaven. It is a Guru who takes us to the 11th step of overcoming ignorance. Without my Guru, I would have just lived and died. I would have never climbed a Ladder that would take me to God. I would

have lived believing in the mythology of religion, and never discovered the truth about who God is, where God is and what God is. One day, when I questioned my Guru about why he never stopped me from praying to Lord Shiva and why he prayed to his Guru, although he believed that God is formless, God is not a statue or a saint, he gave me a profound answer. He said, "I do not pray to my Guru, I pray *through* my Guru. You too," he said, "must pray *through* Lord Shiva." God is omnipresent – present everywhere, omnipotent – all-powerful and omniscient – knows everything. We must learn to surrender to the Divine.

My Guru was an epitome of humility. He used to always say, "We are nothing. God is everything." It is because of him that I was inspired to start the ultimate journey of Spirituality. Without him, I wouldn't be able to write this book, 'The Ladder to Heaven'. At most, I would be able to write about the power of faith and hope.

My mentor opened the door for me to a Spiritual life. For 46 years, I was religious. He made me graduate in Spirituality. His pushing me to go on a quest for the truth, was his greatest gift to me. For 2 years, I left all my work and went into the mountains, spending time in silence and contemplation and scanning all the possible books that I could lay my hands on. I believed it was both the grace of

the Guru and the blessings of the Divine, that by the time I was 48 years old, I realized the Truth. These two years in retreat, in the mountains, made me overcome the ignorance that I lived with and started my 'real' ascent to heaven. Not a heaven in the skies, but the 'real' heaven that I discovered within the temple of my heart. I call this the 11th step on the Ladder to Heaven - Overcoming Ignorance.

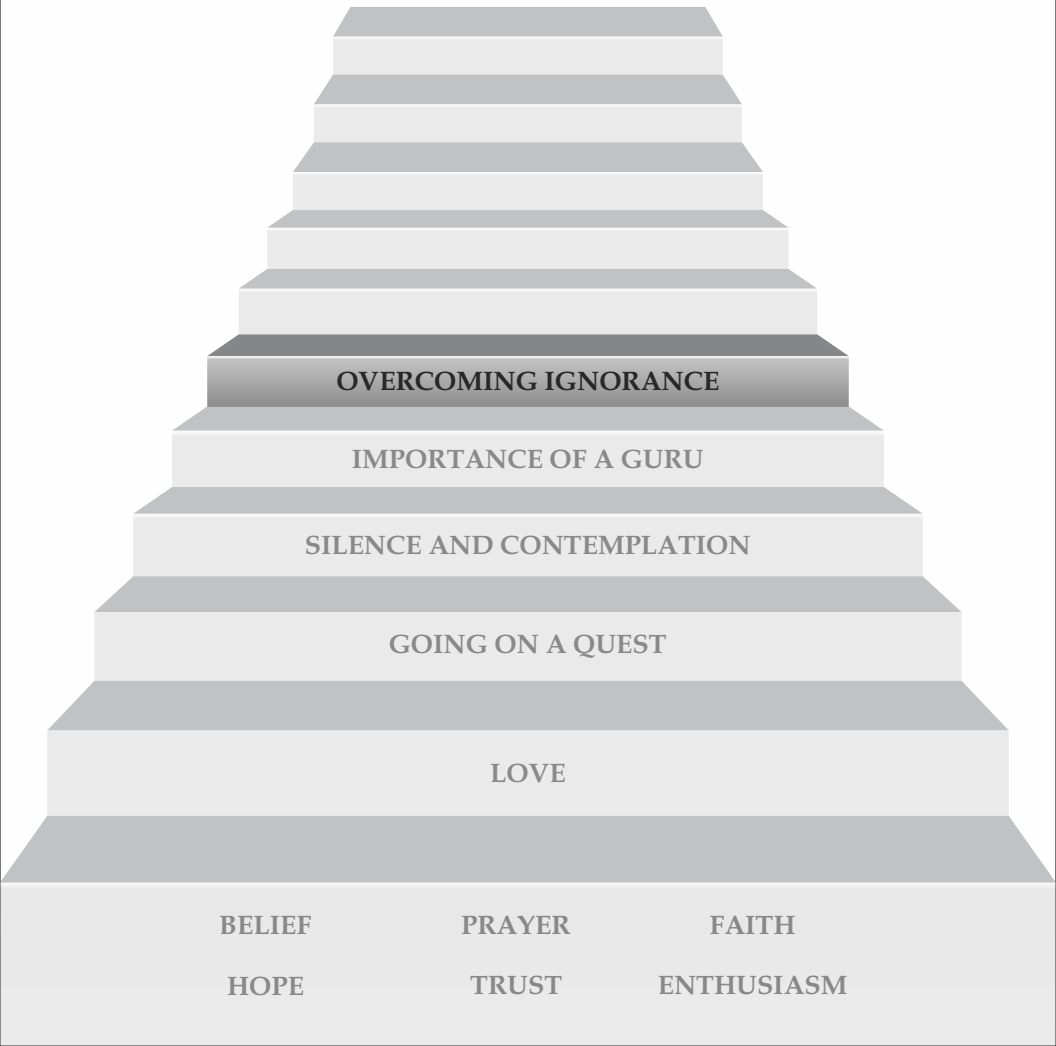
Importance of a Guru
TAKEAWAYS

- ***The 10th step on the Ladder to Heaven is to have a Guru.***
- ***A Guru is one who takes us from 'Gu' to 'Ru'—from darkness to light.***
- ***Our Guru is our Spiritual coach, but in reality, he is a manifestation of the Divine***
- ***It is important to find a true and genuine Guru, otherwise, we will go astray in our journey to God.***
- ***It is a Guru who helps us overcome ignorance and realize the truth.***

STEP 11

Overcoming Ignorance

**“Ignorance is darkness,
We must overcome it with the light of Truth.”**



The 11th step on the Ladder to Heaven is Overcoming Ignorance. If somebody told me 8 years ago that we should overcome ignorance, I would scoff at them and ask them to explain what ignorance they were talking about. I was an ego-driven man and my arrogance reigned supreme. I thought I knew everything. I was rich, famous, and successful. I had faith in God, and I believed that God was protecting me. In my own way, I was unstoppable! I am grateful that I had a Spiritual Master who provoked me to go on a quest and realize the Truth.

Throughout my life, I thought it was enough to believe in God, to pray sincerely, to live with faith and hope, and to trust God. To me, being enthusiastic was loving God. While I did not know where my God truly was, I did not even start a quest to find out. As they say, "Ignorance is bliss!" and I blissfully lived in ignorance.

It was only when I was 46 years old that my Guru provoked me to go on a *Talaash* or quest and I set out to find answers to 9 existential questions. Little did I know that the questions that I set out to answer had answers that were completely different from my philosophy and belief system.

To me, Lord Shiva, my God, was God. I never really

bothered to delve further. I had a general feeling that all Gods ultimately are one and we recognize them with different names based on our religion. But I had no clue about the reality of God. I was ignorant.

While people spoke of heaven and hell, I did not bother to find out where they truly are. I was ignorant about what happens to us after death, just as I was ignorant about how life is actually created on earth.

I knew the biological truth about childbirth. But little did I know about the reality of the Soul or what the human body actually was. I was ignorant that we had a gross physical body that was different from the subtle body that was invisible. I had no clue what the Soul was, though I believed that we all have a Soul. What was the connection between death and rebirth was something that I never pondered upon. All I knew was that there was some connection between our Karma and our rebirth.

I had heard of several terms like *Moksha*, *Nirvana*, Enlightenment, but never bothered to find out what these truly meant. I continued to live in ignorance. My biggest ignorance was that I did not know the purpose of life. Why are we human beings alive? Are we meant just to eat, to sleep, to earn, to spend and to die? It didn't seem logical,

but I was completely ignorant about this and it was this very ignorance that became the trigger of my *Talaash*, my search for Truth.

Most of us human beings are busy chasing success. We believe that success is happiness. We live and die with this myth. Very few realize the truth that in fact, happiness is success. Why do people want to succeed? It is because they think that success leads to achievement, name, fame, money, and ultimately joy. If success created happiness, then the rich and famous should be glad, but if we look around, we will find that many of them are sad. Human beings want to be happy, but most of us experience misery and sorrow. Even those who pray to God and have faith and trust, ultimately suffer as they age, experience disease, decay and die. We human beings experience 'triple suffering'. First, we experience physical suffering of the body. Then, we experience misery of the mind and finally, the agony of the ego. Little do we realize that all our suffering is due to the ignorance that we live in.

It is most unfortunate that we human beings are ignorant about our ignorance. We are overconfident and we think we know everything. Thus, we do not go in search of answers. Those who seek God and heaven, and start climbing the Ladder, ultimately reach a point where they

realize their ignorance. When they go on a quest, their quest starts with acknowledging their ignorance. And if they are sincere in their search, along with being blessed to have a Spiritual Master, they can overcome their ignorance and realize the Truth.

What does one have to do on the 11th step on the Ladder to Heaven? One must become conscious of their ignorance. One must become aware that we are not the body, nor are we the mind.

The mind is our biggest enemy. It makes us believe the myth just as it stops us from realizing the truth. If we have to overcome ignorance, we have to use our power of discrimination. We have to activate our intellect and choose right over wrong. Otherwise, we will live and die in ignorance, and we will suffer. We will never be able to climb the Ladder to Heaven.

This world is all Maya, or illusion. Maya has two powers. It conceals the truth and projects the myth. Because of our ignorance, we are unable to see that everything in this world is Maya or illusion. While we know a dream to be a dream, we think this waking world to be real. Although at death, we know that nothing will be ours, we still get attached to people and possessions and this stops us from

climbing upwards. Everything that happens on earth is a Divine drama or Leela. The Creator has written a storyboard and things unfold as per the storyboard based on our cumulative Karma. If we don't overcome our ignorance about this, we will never realize the truth and we will not be able to move onward and forward.

One must realize that there is a larger purpose for us on earth. When we realize our ignorance and we overcome it, it leads us to a very important step on the Ladder to Heaven - I call it Going Beyond Karma. We all know what Karma is. To climb the Ladder to Heaven, we need to go beyond Karma. How does one do that?

Our greatest Ignorance is that
we are ignorant of our Ignorance.

Overcoming Ignorance
TAKEAWAYS

- *The 11th step on the Ladder to Heaven is Overcoming Ignorance.*

- *We are Spiritually blind. We do not realize that we are not the body, not the mind. We are the Divine Soul.*

- *Overcoming ignorance is like living in a dark room and then switching on the light to eradicate the darkness.*

- *Then, we are enlightened with the truth.*

- *The world is not real. It is a drama, but we are ignorant of this. We get carried away by Maya, the cosmic illusion that conceals the truth and projects the myth.*

- *Unless we realize who we are and why we are here, we will not achieve self-realization and God-realization.*

STEP 12

Going Beyond Karma

**“Most people are doing good Karma
For a good 'next life'.
The wise ones, transcend Karma…
And escape from life after life.”**

BELIEF PRAYER FAITH

HOPE TRUST ENTHUSIASM

When one climbs the Ladder, spends time in Silence and Contemplation, finds a Guru and Overcomes Ignorance, what is the next step, the 12th step? It is understanding the Law of Karma and going beyond it. What does this mean?

Those who believe in God believe in doing their *Dharma*. They must do their duty as per the ethics and values taught to them. Most believers know that God doesn't direct the universe and control our life sitting somewhere up in heaven and giving orders as to what should happen. God controls the universe through Universal Laws and one such important law is popularly known as the Law of Karma. It is the Law of Action and Reaction and it advocates – what you give is what you get. Those who start climbing the Ladder to Heaven, who respect God and live with faith, hope, and enthusiasm, respect the Law of Karma and trust it completely. They know it is a Universal Law, and nobody can escape it. It is the Law of the Boomerang and states that what goes around comes around.

What is the Law of Karma? It is a law that governs the universe based on the principle that if we do good deeds, they will come back to us as positive circumstances, and if we do bad deeds, we will suffer! When bad things happen to people, it is not God who is instructing that bad things should happen to us, but rather it is our own negative Karma coming back to us. Therefore, whatever be our

circumstance, our birth, our gender, our parents, all these are predestined depending on our Karma. But our present actions are in our hands. As per our present actions, new Karma is created, and it determines our future life. Believers in God know that God is not to be blamed for their good or bad luck. Everything is unfolding as per the Law of Karma. However, as we climb the Ladder to Heaven, we go beyond the Law of Karma and move further on the Ladder.

When I went on a quest for the Truth, I stumbled upon the *Kathopanishad* that led me to realize the truth about Karma, about life, death, and rebirth and this opened the doors towards self-realization and God-realization. What did I realize? Every human being has to die. But who dies? It is only the body that dies. The one who was alive, the ME – the Mind and Ego, moves on based on its Karma. This happens when the Life Energy or the Soul departs. Then there is death as there is no breath! Therefore, we human beings are more like a computer that has hardware, software, and a power supply. The physical body is just the hardware. The mind and ego are the software. The Soul is the power supply. Just like the source of power to my computer is the same as the source of power to your computer, the Soul or the Life Energy has a common source. It is the Divine Life Energy that is giving life to one and all.

The body starts its journey as a zygote, a tiny fusion of two cells that grows into an embryo and is finally delivered on earth. Then it is given a name and it lives performing actions or Karma. It is this Karma, good or bad that becomes the cause of our life's circumstances. All Karma is not settled in the same life. When the body dies, all its Karma which is not redeemed, is carried forward to a corpus of Karma based on which ME – the Mind and Ego is reborn in a new body. If our Karma is good, we will be born in fortunate circumstances. If our Karma is bad, then we will be born in miserable circumstances only to settle our past Karma.

This is how the world seems to continue its existence, with people dying and others being reborn. God does not interfere, and he lets the Law of Karma execute on its own.

The Law of Karma is a perfect law. Have you ever seen apples growing on mango trees? Never! Why not? Because the Universal Law does not permit it. The law states - as you sow, so shall you reap. If bad things are happening to seemingly good people, it does not mean that God is cruel, or the Law of Karma has failed. It only means that our own bad Karma is coming back to us. These bad deeds may not be the deeds of the recent past that we can remember. Maybe, they are the deeds done several years ago or even in our previous life. We cannot escape our deeds, even if we

die. The body dies, but death is not the end. For the ME – the Mind and Ego, it is only a bend.

Those who climb this step and go beyond Karma as they contemplate in silence and continue their quest, realize a profound Truth. They realize that the body only experiences Karma during its lifetime. The one that is really responsible is the ME – the Mind and Ego. However, while the body is not permanent, it arrives at birth and departs at death, even the Mind and Ego, ME, is an illusion. It does not exist. All along, we believe that we have a gross physical body that dies and a subtle invisible body that is reborn based on Karma. Going on the 12th step makes us transcend Karma and realize that we are neither the body nor the ME – the Mind and Ego. We are the Divine Soul. Somehow, we live and die in ignorance and we are unable to realize the truth. Therefore, we suffer.

What does this 12th step on the Ladder do in our climb to Heaven? It makes us 'drop' all Karma that we may be carrying from several *Janmas* or lifetimes. Life after life we, the ME – Mind and Ego, accumulate Karma due to ignorance. When we climb this 12th step, we go beyond Karma. We realize that we are not the body, not even the ME – Mind and Ego and we are liberated from all suffering that occurs due to rebirth after the death of the physical body.

We have now reached the 12th step on the Ladder to Heaven. We have started our quest and we have overcome ignorance. Now, it is the final climb - the climb towards the Realization of the Truth.

Going Beyond Karma
TAKEAWAYS

- ***The 12th step on the Ladder to Heaven is Going Beyond Karma.***

- ***People who believe in God, believe in his universal law – the Law of Karma. However, to ascend the Ladder to Heaven, one must go beyond Karma.***

- ***Going beyond Karma is realizing that we are not the body that dies. People think we are the Mind and Ego that is reborn.***

- ***Those who climb the Ladder go beyond to realize that we are the Divine Soul. They drop all their Karma like a pebble in the ocean and move forward towards liberation.***

STEP 13

Realization of the Truth

**“You can't discover the Truth.
You have to Realize it with your 'Real-Eyes'.”**

BELIEF PRAYER FAITH

HOPE TRUST ENTHUSIASM

This is the biggest step on the Ladder to Heaven. If we reach this step, then there are chances that we will achieve our Ultimate Goal. This step is called Realization of the Truth. Let us take stock of the Ladder that we have been climbing so far. A majority of mankind can climb the first part of the Ladder – belief, prayer, faith, hope, trust, enthusiasm. These 6 steps are not difficult. Then, comes the true devotee of the Lord. Such a person loves God and seeks God. This is the 7th step. After crossing the 7 steps, most people stop. They live and they die, and the cycle goes on. This is because they don't go on a quest and don't find a Guru. Thus they do not overcome ignorance. They don't go beyond their Karma and they don't spend time in silence and in Divine Union with God.

Steps 8 to 12 are difficult steps and a very rare minority climbs these steps. Probably, less than 1% of humanity goes on a genuine quest to find the true purpose of life and realize God. Out of the 1% that goes on a quest, only 0.1% realizes the truth. This makes it a very tiny number of people.

What is this realization of truth that becomes the biggest step, the 13th step on the Ladder to Heaven? Knowledge is not Realization. People who are climbing steps 8 to 12 may overcome ignorance and understand several truths about

life, but still, they don't realize the truth. Realization happens when we open our real eyes. Then we understand the truth about self and God. Realization starts with self-realization and ends with God-realization.

What is self-realization? It is realizing *Neti Neti*, Not This, Not This. I am not the body; I am not the mind. It is going further to realize *Tat Tvam Asi*, Thou Art That – the power that gives life. We are the Divine Soul! Those who realize this truth, realize that this body is made up of earth, water, air, fire, and space. In the end, it returns to dust. We are not this body. They also realize that we are not the mind. We can see our eyes, our nose, and our skin. We can also see an X-ray of our heart or brain, just as we can cut through our flesh, muscle and see the blood flow out and see the bone. If we break the bone, we will find bone marrow. But there is nothing else.

We are said to have a subtle body made up of the mind, memory, intellect and ego. All along, we believe that we are this subtle body. This is because we do not realize the truth. Therefore, the subtle body, let us call it ME – Mind and Ego, is born again and again based on our Karma. If we overcome our ignorance, then we experience a profound realization. We realize that not only we are not the body, we are also not ME – the Mind and Ego. We are the Divine Soul. The moment we realize this truth, we can be liberated from

the cycle of death and rebirth because we are liberated from all Karma. Karma belongs to the illusory ME – the Mind and Ego, which doesn't exist. All along, it is our ignorance that makes us believe we are ME – the Mind and Ego. The moment we realize the truth, we are free. This is called self-realization.

Today, even science, which was up to now at loggerheads with Spirituality, agrees that we human beings are not the physical body that we appear to be, but rather energy. Our physical body is made up of over 30 trillion cells. But if we examine each cell, not just the atom or molecule, but the smallest part, called a quark, we will find that it is nothing but energy, as scientists have discovered, and which they call Wave-Particle Duality.

Self-realization is not easy. Therefore, there is no crowd on the 13th step of the Ladder to Heaven. A rare minority who loves God and seeks God is blessed to reach here. This minority realizes that we are like the wave in the ocean. We come from the ocean and go back into it. God is the ocean. We are nothing. He is everything.

There are several methods that will help in the realization of the truth. One popular method is known as the Law of Causation. It has 3 tenets:

1. Every effect has a cause
2. The effect is nothing but the cause in a different form
3. Remove the cause and there is no effect

This can be explained with the help of an example. A gold ring, a gold bracelet, and a gold chain are effects. Gold is their cause. They are nothing but gold in different forms. If you remove the gold, nothing remains. There will be no ring, no bracelet, and no chain. We human beings too are effects. The Divine is the cause. As long as the Divine is within, we have breath, but the moment the cause leaves us, we return to dust. This is because we are just the effects of the cause. The Divine is the cause. All this is realization of the truth and unless we realize the truth, we cannot climb the last 3 steps that take us to the gate of heaven.

What stops us from the realization of the truth? It is our own mind. The mind is a rascal. It dumps us with thoughts and fills our life with ignorance. It stops us from realization because such a realization will destroy the very existence of the mind. We see somebody wearing a T-shirt. The mind tells us it is a T-shirt, but the one who realizes the truth realizes that it may look like a T-shirt, but in reality, it is actually made up of threads. The mind stops us from seeing deeper to realize the truth. Can't we see that everything beautiful that is alive in this world, is beautiful because

there is Divine life in it? It may be a beautiful butterfly or a bird or for that matter, a beautiful human being. All this beauty lasts only till the life inside remains. The moment there is no breath, there is death, all the beauty starts to disappear. It is the Divinity in all of us that creates beauty, but we are unable to realize the truth. This is because of Maya, the universal illusion. It stops us from climbing the Ladder to Heaven. We need the grace of God and the guidance of the Guru to overcome ignorance and realize the truth.

How often do you find somebody saying, "I am Jennifer?" This is not the truth, though. She is not Jennifer! Only her name is Jennifer. When she was born, she was not Jennifer. Somehow, we identify ourselves with this body and our name which we are not. At death, the body will die, but we who are alive in the body move on. We must realize this truth if we want to climb the Ladder to Heaven.

What stops a person from the realization of the Truth? Although we may have the knowledge of who we are, and what our purpose is, although we may have a Guru who helps us overcome ignorance, although we may spend time in silence as we go on a quest, why is it that we still don't realize the truth? It is because there is a war within, a war that stops us from realization despite having all the

knowledge. Our own Mind and Ego, ME along with the 5 senses of the body make every effort possible to stop such a realization. How, then, can we climb the next step and win the war that rages within?

Realization of the Truth
TAKEAWAYS

- ***The 13th step on the Ladder to Heaven is Realization of the Truth.***

- ***It is the realization that we are not the body, not the mind, but the Divine Soul.***

- ***Knowledge is not realization. It is only when we become conscious of who we are not, that we can realize who we truly are.***

- ***There are several methods that can help a genuine seeker of God realize the truth.***

- ***Our biggest enemy that stops us from realization of the truth is our own Mind and Ego — ME.***

- ***Unless we win the war that rages within, we may have all the knowledge but still, we may not realize the truth.***

STEP 14

Winning the War Within

**“Realized Souls are not free from the War within,
But most often they win it.”**

On the journey to heaven, as we climb the Ladder step by step, we realize the Truth. This only happens for those who go on a quest, who love God so intensely that they find a Guru who helps them overcome ignorance as they transcend Karma, realizing that we are not the body, not the ME – the Mind and Ego. We are the Divine Soul.

First of all, just knowing this is not enough. Anybody can read about this and pretend to know it. But this is not realization. Realization of the truth means that our life gets transformed, with the realization. We live with dispassion and detachment, with discrimination and discipline as we desire liberation and the Divine, nothing else! Once we arrive at this step on the Ladder, we are still 3 steps away – 3 big steps away from our Ultimate Goal.

The first step after realization is to Win the War Within. Although we experience realization of the Truth, we are still alive in a body-mind complex. We still live with the mind that is a monkey and the 5 senses that are like 5 wild horses that lead our body astray. We have to be the charioteer that controls the mind, the reigns that control the 5 horses, the 5 senses. We have to be the Divine Soul that we truly are, and we must use our intellect to direct our life, post realization!

What happens in this war? The mind will desire, and the

senses will crave. However, if our realization is real, our intellect will rule and will prevent the body-mind from defeating us. We must live like a lotus in a dirty pond. The world around us will be full of worldly attractions, but the realized Soul will not sink into this world or *Samsara*. One who has realized needs the waters of this world to live but will use the water like an active motorboat does, moving forward and onward without sinking in the waters of this world.

How does a realized one feel? He feels he is imprisoned in the prison of the body-mind. He wants to escape and climb the penultimate step of liberation. He wants to be free from the prison! But there are several prison bars that hold him back. Some of the prison bars are Duty, Lust, and Shame.

Realization makes one aware that nothing is real, everything is an illusion, it's only a cosmic drama! However, duty tries to defeat a Realized Soul. It tries to bind him to doing his duty, things that he must do, being the one who is in the body-mind.

Ramakant had realized the Truth. But he wasn't able to be liberated because of so many reasons. He had a family and they kept demanding that he fulfills their needs. He had to go to work to earn for them and wasn't able to spend time on his Spiritual

pursuits. If he neglected his familial duties in order to meditate, his mind would create an agitation and demand that he fulfills his duty. Although he fulfilled his familial duties, there were luxuries that his family wanted. And so, he was pushed away not only from spirituality , but also dragged into the material world of pleasures. Ramakant had to make a choice: either to climb the next step on the Ladder and move on despite the demands of his family, or give in and sink! He had to make a choice and this would decide whether he would win the war within or not.

Every human being who realizes the Truth continues to live in this world. The world distracts us with offerings that create lust. We human beings grow up with passionate desires but climbing the Ladder to Heaven calls for us to live dispassionately and with detachment. When there is a war within, and we are attracted to sensual pleasures, it becomes a test for the realized one. If he falls prey to the sense pleasures, then he loses the war to lust. He cannot reach heaven's gate. However, a true seeker who realizes the Truth goes beyond lust as he moves forward and Godward.

What does this mean? Does this mean that the one who is climbing the Ladder to Heaven must give up all pleasures and happiness in this world? This is the way a non-realized one would see the life of a Realized Soul. However, a truly

Realized Soul transcends lust. It is not that fulfilling of lust actually gives true happiness. The one who has climbed the ladder upto this step of winning the war, realizes that lust is only momentary pleasure and not eternal peace and bliss.Thus, he escapes from these cravings and desires, these feelings of lust which, ultimately, make a human being sink in misery and sorrow.

During my journey and after I realized certain truths, I was attacked by shame. There were several resolutions that I had made that altered my lifestyle, be it to do with my food, my clothing or my social engagements. None of these could give me pleasure anymore as I lived in a state of bliss, *Ananda*, eternal joy, and peace. But the world had so many things to say about me and my life. My reaction to this was inspired by my Guru's teachings. He said, *"They will say, let them say! You move on. Do not look back."*

Any good sportsman who plays hockey or football knows that their eyes must be on the ball that is with them. The moment they look at others, they will lose the ball. If we are serious about climbing the Ladder to realize God, then we must not stop. Only the unstoppable believer, who seeks liberation and the Divine and nothing else, wins the war within and reaches the next step on the Ladder and is liberated.

Winning the War Within
TAKEAWAYS

- *The 14th step on the Ladder to Heaven is Winning the War within.*

- *The war is between our own mind and ego, ME, and our realized self.*

- *Although we have realized the truth, there is a constant effort by the mind to make us sink into the desires and cravings of this world.*

- *We are like helpless prisoners who live in a prison of Duty, Lust, and Shame.*

- *Unless we win the war within, we can never be liberated and reach the top of the Ladder.*

STEP 15

Liberation

“Liberation is not just escaping from all suffering when we are alive. It is being free from the cycle of death and rebirth.”

Before climbing any further, one must stop and realize what this journey is all about. We human beings want God, we want to go to heaven, but we cannot arrive at our destination without realizing who we are and who God is. Most of us seek God because God is the ultimate source of happiness. But we don't take the trouble to realize where God is. Is God living in some distant planet, some heaven up in the skies? If we live with this ignorance, we will never realize God.

Therefore, as we climb the Ladder to Heaven, we must go on a quest, overcome ignorance and realize the truth about God. God is a power beyond human comprehension. If I ask you to close your eyes and see me with your ears, can you do it? You would say that it is not possible. Only the eyes can see. Similarly, we human beings have not been given the sense perception to perceive God. It is only when we realize this truth, that we can climb the second last step to heaven – Liberation and move towards the Ultimate Goal of Heaven.

What is Liberation all about? Once we pass the step of realization and win the battle with our own body, mind, and ego, then we will be liberated and are free to move towards what we call heaven.

Liberation has 2 steps: First, we must be liberated while we

are alive. And second, we must be liberated at death. What happens to a person who is liberated when alive? Although we live in a body-mind complex, one who is liberated has realized the truth. He overcomes ignorance and lives blissfully and peacefully without suffering the triple suffering of the body, mind, and ego. A liberated being lives in the body, but knows we are not the body; is troubled by the thoughts of the mind, but realizes that we are not the mind. A liberated being transcends the ego and is free from this world of allurements and attractions.

How then does a liberated being live? A liberated being lives in Yoga or Divine union, having realized that he is none other than the Soul which is nothing but a manifestation of the Divine. He lives as the Divine instrument, doing the Divine will. This is known as the Yoga of action or *Karma* Yoga. The liberated being also lives with Divine love and devotion. This Yoga of devotion is called *Bhakti* Yoga. The next form of Yoga that fills the life of a liberated being is the Yoga of education or *Gyana* Yoga. Such a being continues to live educating himself on the knowledge and wisdom that he has already acquired but goes deeper into it every day that he is alive. However, the most important yoga is *Dhyana* Yoga or Yoga of meditation or silence. This is considered to be the most important because it is in these moments of Divine silence that the

God within communicates with the God that is universal and omnipresent. One becomes conscious of Divinity.

One who is liberated continues to live in Yoga or Divine union till the moment of death of the body. The body dies. For average human beings who have not realized the truth and are not liberated, the ME – the Mind and Ego is reborn based on their Karma. But a liberated being is not reborn. Such a realized Soul is liberated from the cycle of death and rebirth and climbs to the ultimate step on the Ladder. However, if the realized being loses the war and falls prey to lust and craving, such a being may not be liberated.

As kids, we all played the game 'Snakes and Ladders'. Don't we remember the big snake at 99 that could bite us and take us back to 1 to restart the game? So also, is the game of life. If the snake of desires, lust, and cravings attacks a realized one, just one step before the destination, then he would have to start his climb again.

Liberation is not an easy game. A very tiny group of human beings are fortunate to be liberated and to move to the final step of Unification. Most of humanity continues to suffer because of what is popularly known as the cycle of death and rebirth. Most religions of this world advocate the Ultimate Goal of life as Liberation. Some call it *Moksha or*

Mukti, the Buddha called it *Nirvana*, and the modern world calls it Enlightenment. Whether you call it liberation or salvation, it is the same destination that is given different names or titles. The Ultimate Goal of a human being is to escape from suffering, to be liberated from returning to earth and to become one with God. Are you ready to climb the next and ultimate step from liberation to unification?

Liberation TAKEAWAYS

- ***The 15th step on the Ladder to Heaven is Liberation.***
- ***Liberation has 2 steps. First, we must be liberated while we are alive. This is liberation from misery and suffering.***
- ***The final liberation is liberation at death. We escape from the cycle of death and rebirth and are liberated forever, never to be born again.***
- ***It is not easy to be liberated. Liberation leads us to our Ultimate Goal.***

STEP 16

Unification

**“Unification is becoming one with God.
Our Soul merges with the Divine…
just as the wave merges with the ocean.”**

What is the ultimate step on the Ladder to Heaven? It is not just praying to God and loving God. It is not just going on a quest and knowing the truth. The ultimate step on the Ladder to Heaven is climbing from Liberation to Unification.

Unification is becoming one with God. In simplest terms, it is understanding how the wave becomes one with the ocean. The wave comes from the ocean and goes back into the ocean. In fact, the wave is nothing by itself. It is a part of the ocean. Unification is also the same thing. When the Divine Soul, that we truly are, is liberated from ignorance and from the cycle of death and rebirth, it unites with the Divine or the cosmic consciousness to become one. That is Unification. This is having climbed the Ladder to Heaven.

How is unification connected to reaching heaven? What is heaven? It is the abode of God. It is a place where God exists. Unfortunately, as we live in a body-mind complex, we live with ignorance and we think God too is made of bone and skin. We don't realize the truth that God is the one who lives within. When we realize this and we live as the liberated Soul, we are heading towards the top of the Ladder to Heaven. However, it is only when the death of the body happens, that we can transcend Karma through realizing that we are not the ME – the Mind and Ego and we

escape from rebirth. The energy that gives life within is our true identity. It is a manifestation of the Divine, imprisoned in a body-mind complex. It is known as the Soul, the Spirit, *Chi, Prana or Atman*. The names are different, but it is the same energy that gives us life. It is God Energy. When this God-energy is liberated, we who live in ignorance as ME – the mind and ego, are reborn. But, if we overcome ignorance, we realize the truth, we are liberated from the war within, then we are united with the Divine and reach the gate of heaven.

In reality, there is no heaven and there is no gate. There is just God. God is a universal power, a power that exists everywhere, a power that gives us life, a power that makes the earth rotate causing day and night, a power that creates the breeze, the waves in the seas, and the fruits on the trees. We can experience this power all the time, in the wind that blows, the water that flows and the sun that glows. Do we need proof that such a power exists? It is the same power that exists in each of the cells of the human body, in over 30 trillion cells and in 8 billion human beings and in the trillions and quadrillions of other plants, animals, and insects.

The Divine Power is everywhere. To reach heaven is to achieve unification with the Power. Unification that comes after realization of the truth and liberation at death.

Unfortunately, most of us do not realize the truth, and therefore, there is no liberation and unification. Although we pray to God and love God, we do not go on a quest and overcome the ignorance that will make us climb the Ladder to Heaven.

I too lived a life of ignorance for 48 years. Then I realized that we human beings are blessed with the opportunity to climb the Ladder to Heaven. It is not easy, but it is possible. While the majority of mankind prays, only a tiny minority climbs the Ladder that takes them to Realization, Liberation, and Unification. They are the fortunate few who become one with God. The others die only to be reborn. Then they go through a life that sees both pleasure and pain. Ultimately, they die and are reborn again. This cycle of death and rebirth continues again and again. We live with the ignorance and remain far away from our Lord. The goal of humanity is to escape from this cycle and to become one with God.

There are some religions in this world that talk about us having to face the day of judgement when we go to heaven after death. The question that arises is – who will go to heaven or hell? The body dies, and as it lies below the soil, we see it disintegrates into dust. There is no possibility of going to heaven or hell. Further, heaven and hell are not a

physical location that we can go to. Nobody has seen heaven or hell. If we do good deeds, we are reborn in a life that is heavenly. But if we collect bad Karma with our sins, then we will be faced with hell, not just in this life, but in the life thereafter.

And God! God is not an old man with a long white beard sitting somewhere up in the clouds. God is a Universal Power, a Power beyond human comprehension. We don't know who God is, where God is or what God is, but God is. Unification is becoming one with the Divine. It is escaping from the cycle of death and rebirth, being liberated and experiencing unification with the Divine.

Whatever be your religion, and whatever be the other circumstances of your life, may this book – 'The Ladder to Heaven', inspire you to climb step by step, until you go beyond the basics of prayer, faith, hope, trust, and enthusiasm. May your love for the Divine and the grace of your Spiritual Master lead you on a quest to realize the truth. May you too overcome the ignorance that stops you from realization and as you realize the truth, may you win the war within to be liberated and may you climb the final step of unification with the Divine. This is the Ultimate Goal of human life.

Unification
TAKEAWAYS

- *The last step on the Ladder to Heaven is Unification.*
- *Unification means becoming one with the Divine. It is just like the wave that becomes one with the ocean*
- *This part of the journey starts with a quest, we overcome ignorance, we realize the truth and we are liberated.*
- *Unless we cross these steps, there can be no unification with the Divine.*
- *Because we human beings live with ignorance, we suffer as body, mind, and ego.*
- *Heaven and hell are not physical locations. Those who realize the truth, experience true heaven as they realize God.*
- *It starts with self-realization and ends with God-realization.*
- *Our Ultimate Goal is unification, becoming one with God.*

AFTERWORD

If I look back at my life, I laugh at myself because I was climbing steps one to seven and hoping to get to heaven. Not just for 5 or 10 years, but for 40 long years I believed in 'my' God. I prayed, I had faith, I lived with hope and complete trust. My enthusiasm was very visible and my love for God was known. But for 4 decades, I was going up and down these steps, but reaching nowhere.

It was my Spiritual Master, my Guru who provoked me to introspect when I was 46 years old and pushed me to go on a quest. Then I realized the truth and climbed many more steps. The last two steps on the Ladder are in the hands of the Divine. There can be no liberation and unification until the body dies. It is only then that we can be united with the Divine.

But what does one do after realizing the Truth? When we realize that we are not the body we wear, but the ones who wear the body, then we become conscious of our true identity. We all have the ME – the Mind and Ego, but the one who has realized the truth, transcends the mind and ego, to live as the Divine Soul.

Imagine, you were going to buy bread from a bakery. You walked for 10 minutes and at the traffic light, you took a right turn and walked awhile more. Then, when you came to a little park, you took another right turn and walked on. It was a good 20 to 30 minutes walk to reach your favorite bakery. You did that for several months until one day you met a friend and told him about your favorite bakery. He was your neighbor and lived a few blocks on the left. He challenged you that his bakery was better, and it was just a few minutes away, right behind his house. The next day you went to your friend's house in the neighborhood. He took you through a tiny alley and in two minutes you reached his bakery. You were surprised because it was the same bakery you had been going to all these months. You struggled walking 30 minutes to get there and lost an hour each time you went to the bakery, but now you realized that it was less than 5 minutes away. What would you do henceforth? Would you still waste an hour every day following your old route or would you take the shortcut? Once you realize that your bakery could be accessed through the tiny alley, you would never return to the long route!

One who realizes the truth that we are the Divine Soul doesn't live like the body and the mind anymore. But this realization must come! Knowledge is not realization. Even

if we have the knowledge, but we don't realize, then we continue to live in ignorance. Once I realized several truths about life, I transcended the triple suffering that most humans face. No doubt my body experienced pain, but I did not suffer the pain of the body. I would take the required medication and move on.

There was hardly any misery of the mind because I realized that the mind is a monkey. It swings to the past and then to the future. I also transcended the agony of the ego because I realized I was the Divine Soul.

This was just liberation from suffering while I was alive. But my goal is to escape from the cycle of death and rebirth. I realized the truth about the Law of Karma and found a way to live as a Divine instrument. If I was not the body or the mind and ego, then none of the actions that seemed to be mine, were mine. This liberated me not only from Karma that I was performing but from all the accumulated Karma, the ME – the Mind and Ego had collected life after life.

How did climbing the Ladder change my life? When I climbed on to the 8th step and started my quest, it was a turning point. Then step after step, I moved forward, towards my Ultimate Goal. Each step on the Ladder to Heaven only got me closer in my search for God. I never

knew the power of silence until my Guru urged me to practise it. He made me realize so many truths like the truth of Karma, just as he helped me overcome several layers of ignorance that had made me sink in darkness.

I used to ask my Guru hundreds of questions. He used to laugh at me but he was happy to answer them. Then, one day he told me, you don't need to ask any more questions. He could probably see the difference between knowledge and realization. My life was transformed. After I was 48 and blessed with several realizations, I became conscious that God was around me all the time. I no more searched for God, for I could feel God's Divine presence in everybody and in everything. Earlier, I used to appreciate the beautiful creations of God. But now I could see the Divinity in beauty. Everything beautiful was a manifestation of the Divine. God was everywhere. I realized that God is the one reality, everything else is an illusion.

I started living a life of eternal bliss and everlasting peace, a state known as *Satchitananda* or eternal bliss that comes from chit or consciousness of the *Sach* or truth. It is a great feeling to be blessed with this consciousness, even though it is a challenge.

My goal now is to live like a realized Soul or *Jivanmukta*, a

liberated Soul embodied in a body-mind complex. How can I possibly do that? It is by living with a steady intellect, a state called *Sthitpragya*, as stated by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. All this is easier said than done. But once it is done, it is truly blissful.

For the last 5 years, my life has been a life of Yoga. Not just because I do *Asanas* or *Pranayama* or breathing techniques but because I live in constant union with the Divine. One can remain in Yoga in 4 ways. I live my life with all the 4 ways to remain in Union. I make an effort for all my actions to be Karma Yoga, done as per Divine directions, as an instrument of the Divine and I surrender all results to the Divine. My devotion or Bhakti is to be constantly united in my faith. I spend time in silence or Dhyana Yoga to communicate with the Divine. And any free time that is left, I spend in Gyana Yoga, continuing to study and gain further wisdom of the truth. My life goes round and round, as if these 4 forms of Yoga are a part of one cycle of Yoga, or Divine union that appears as four different ways but in reality is one.

I live in Divine surrender, accepting the Divine will. I know that ultimately, this body will die. I try to live as a liberated Soul, so that I can be ultimately united with the Divine. But I know that this is not in my hands. My Guru warned me

several times. Realization is not liberation and unification. "Beware!" he used to warn me. "As long as we live in this human existence, we may fall prey to temptations and lose our realization to desires of lust." Therefore, it is important to constantly live in Yoga, just as it is important to live with dispassion and detachment, discrimination, discipline and the desire for liberation and the Divine.

Each day, I pray to the God that lives in the temple of my heart to bless me to live as the Divine Soul and not to sink in *Samsara*, the world of attractions and distractions. I keep myself busy doing the Divine will. I believe I have only one mission—to help people realize the truth and so, I do nothing else other than remain in Yoga and focus on my mission. Even this book is a message, a flash from the Divine. I have not done anything, just followed the direction to write—'The Ladder to Heaven'. May it help genuine seekers to climb the Ladder to Heaven and realize the Truth.

POEM

Do you know that there is a Ladder to Heaven?
For all to climb, be it man or woman
But we mustn't stop at step seven or eleven
We must go on till we reach our heaven

Many of us want to go to God
But we don't know the truth about our Lord
We just go to a temple, mosque, and church
Instead of going on a quest to search

The first step to God is Belief
For those who don't believe, how can they achieve?
There are some who are atheist or agnostic
A life without faith, they choose to pick

But the ones who believe, they take their first step
The Ladder to Heaven they start to inspect
They know without doubt that God exists
They believe and pray and their belief persists

There is not a day that they don't Pray
With folded hands they go to God and say
Not only to the Lord everything they tell
They also listen to Him, not just ring the bell

The third step on the Ladder is Faith
Without this one cannot reach heaven's gate
Faith is Full Assurance In The Heart
Our journey to God, it helps to start

The fourth step on the Ladder is Hope
Without Hope, how can anyone cope?
Those who believe in God they find
He is there when you reach the end of the rope

And then, the believers in God, they Trust
It is Trust that forms their journey's thrust
Trust is unconditional surrender to God
And always accepting the will of the Lord

After Belief, Prayer, Faith, Hope & Trust
What is it that stands out first?
It is Enthusiasm, that is step six
'Entheos', 'In God,' that gets our problems fixed

Then comes step seven, it's Love for God
We make it a priority, the Love for our Lord
To us, God is not someone who lives far away
Every moment that we live, with us He does stay

It is this Love that makes us seek
Our passion for God makes us climb the peak
Because we want God, we Go on a Quest
And whatever we believed, we put it to test

In our search for God we Contemplate
We spend time in Silence and for God we wait
We don't accept what the scriptures tell
And we find the truth about heaven and hell

Importance of a Guru comes before step eleven
For without a Guru, how can we discover heaven?
A Guru takes us from darkness to light
And to overcome ignorance, he makes us fight

As we Overcome Ignorance and discover the myth
We climb step eleven to realize the truth
We realize that we are not the ego, body, and mind
We are the Divine Soul, on realization we find

Of course, there is Karma and we must do good
As we sow, so shall we reap, that will be our food
But step twelve on the Ladder is not to live after we die
But to learn how to God our Soul must fly

Realization is not the end of the game
There is a War Within that can make us lame
We must transcend our enemy – ME
From Mind and Ego, we must be free

Step fifteen on the Ladder is Liberation
Liberation only comes after Realization
Liberation, when alive, is from suffering being free
And from rebirth, to escape and with our Lord to be

The final step on the Ladder to Heaven
Comes after climbing sixteen steps, we reckon
It is Unification of the Divine and our Soul
Which is our life's Ultimate Goal

Climbing this Ladder is the purpose of our life
Not just to live with misery and strife
For those who live on planet earth
They must face suffering birth after birth

Where are you on this Ladder, my dear?
Do you live with faith or do you live with fear?
Have you started on the Ladder to God?
The Ladder to Heaven will make you one with the Lord!

By
AiR
Atman in Ravi

About the Author – AiR Atman in Ravi

AiR – *Atman* in Ravi, is an embodied Soul whose only mission in life is to help people realize the Truth. He was born in Bangalore on October 15, 1966. At a very young age, Ravi V. Melwani mastered the craft of business and became a very successful businessman who revolutionized retailing in India with the stores KidsKemp, Big KidsKemp, and Kemp Fort.

After making millions, he realized that Life is not just about making money. He shut down his business at the age of 40, transformed his life from Ravi V. Melwani to RVM, living by the RVM philosophy – Rejoice, Value Life, and Make a Difference. He started doing H.I.S. work – Humanitarian, Inspirational and Spiritual work. His mission was to 'Make a Difference' in this world before his journey was over.

As a part of the humanitarian initiative, a charitable hospital and charitable homes were set up with an aim to provide free medical treatment and care to the poor, destitute, and needy. Today, over 600 homeless and suffering people are served and cared for in destitute homes and provided with free shelter, food, clothing, and medical care.

A School of Inspiration was set up that inspired the lives of many people through motivating talks, inspirational books and videos, and thought-provoking quotes.

A Shiva Temple was built in the year 1995 in Bangalore, which is now known as the Shivoham Shiva Temple. AiR now believes that religion is just a kindergarten of Spirituality, and we all have to go beyond religion to truly realize God.

One day, his Guru provoked him to introspect: What is the purpose of life? Is life just meant to seek pleasures and to live and die without any purpose? What happens after death? Will we be reborn? Where is God? Several questions like these took him on a quest, a search for the Truth. He gave up his life of Achievement and Fulfillment in search of the final peak of life: Enlightenment.

After a few years of intense search in retreat, deep in the mountains, he realized that we are not this Body. We are the Soul, the Atman. He changed his name to AiR –*Atman* in Ravi. He metamorphosed to AiR and gave up his entire Life as RVM and started living as an instrument of God, doing His Divine Will. This led to several Realizations that formed his new mission of life – to help people Realize the Truth.

Since then, AiR's life has been dedicated to reaching out and helping people to eradicate the ignorance that we live in. While the Truth is the Truth, our mind still resists from accepting it. Based on his realizations, AiR has published several books, written bhajans, blogs, quotes and poems and has taken up several other initiatives that can direct people towards the Truth like conducting AiR Spiritual Retreats and giving talks that help people evolve in their spiritual journey to realize the Truth. He is a TEDx speaker and is also invited to speak at several organisations like YPO (Young Presidents' Organization), Rotary Club, Lions Club, and at many corporates, schools, and colleges.

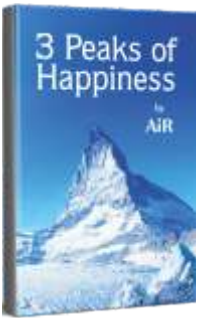
Started with nothing ...
Became something...
Achieved everything,
Only to realize we are nothing!

BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

1. Talaash

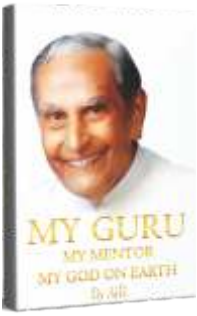
'Talaash' means Search or Quest. This book by AiR is his personal journey to realize the Truth where he shares his Realization that we are not the body and the mind that we seem to be. We are Power. The Divine life force is known as Soul, Spirit or Atman. This search and quest by AiR made him transform his life. It is a quest that made him realize the Truth. It might be just that book which inspires you to attain Liberation.

2. 3 Peaks of Happiness



'3 Peaks of Happiness' by AiR is a simple book that talks about the quest of all humanity. Everybody wants to be happy. But is everybody happy? No. The reason is we are stuck on the first peak of Happiness – Achievement. Only about 20% of the people are lucky to climb the second peak of Happiness – Fulfillment, which comes from contentment. But there is a third peak beyond. The third peak of Happiness will liberate you from the prisons of misery and sorrow and give you eternal Joy and Bliss.

3. My Guru, My Mentor, My God on Earth

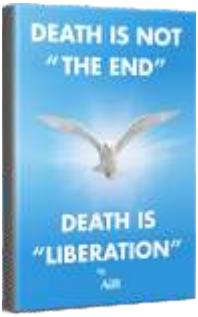


In this book AiR shares his experiences with his Guru who was not just his Guru and Mentor, but also his God on Earth. We all need a coach, a teacher to help us understand, guide us to live life and this book 'My Guru' will inspire you to find your Guru or to make your relationship with your Guru more fulfilling and meaningful.

4. I will Never Die. Death is not "The End"

In the journey of his life, AiR realized many Truths. One of the Truths was that he would never die. The body will die, but the one who lives in the body never dies. We are not the body that we wear; we are the ones who wear the body. Death is not the end. It is a bend to transcend. This book reveals the Truth about Death.

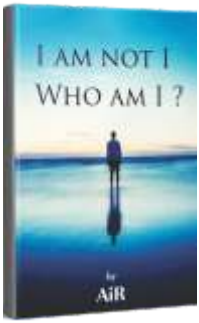
5. Death is Not "The End". Death is "Liberation"



This second book in the series of books on death by AiR – touches on the secret of the Kathopanishad, which talks about what

happens at death. One of two things happens – if we think we are the body and mind as a doer, we are reborn. But if we think we are not the body and mind, but the Energy, we are liberated to eternal Joy and Peace.

6. I am not I. Who am I?



Here, AiR talks of his quest and Realization that we are not who we think we are. We have a house, but we are not the house. We have a car, but we are not the car. We have a body, but we are not the body. We may have a mind, but we are not the mind. Who are we? Realize the Truth.

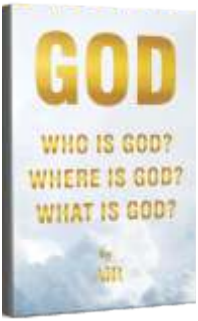
7. The Mind is a Rascal

Can you believe that the mind is a rascal? You always thought that the mind is king – that it is everything. But just try this. Sit quietly for an hour, and try to find the mind. Where is it? You will find that the mind doesn't exist. This amazing book by AiR will teach us that the mind is our enemy. It is the one that makes us suffer. It is time to find the rascal and to kill it. How do we do this?

8. A Cosmic Drama

This book authored by AiR challenges us to think that whatever is happening in life is not real. It is nothing but a drama. The earth is a big stage, and we are all actors who come and go. There is no need to worry and cry till we die. If we understand the Truth, we can enjoy the show called life.

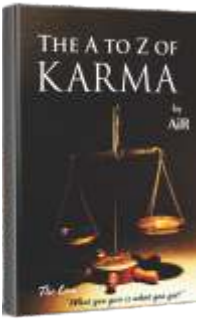
9. Who is God? Where is God? What is God?



Well, this might seem to be a simple set of questions, but nobody really knows the answers. We all know that God exists. We pray to a God as per our religion but what is the Truth about God? Has anybody seen God? Where is God? This simple book will change your perception and belief about God and bring you closer to the Power called God. It will help you realize God.

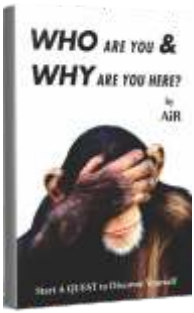
10. The A to Z of Karma

Most people are aware of the concept of Karma – the law that states, "What you give is what you get." But not



everybody knows the A to Z of Karma, that we can actually transcend Karma, escape from it and achieve Moksha, Nirvana, Liberation or Enlightenment. This book reveals the secret – of eternal Joy and Peace - a life without any misery or suffering.

11. Who Are You & Why Are You Here?



This is a simple book which challenges us to discover the secret of our life. Most of us think we are the body-mind complex, but in reality, we are not. The body will die and return to dust. Where is the mind, we cannot find. Who are we in reality? And beyond that what is the purpose of life on earth? This book will give you all the answers.

12. The 4th Factor

Man thinks that he can achieve anything. He believes that there is nothing in this world he can't do. But, he doesn't realize that his efforts and equipment are not enough to decide the results of his actions. Sometimes, he does his best but things don't work out the way he

wants. He then realizes the importance of the 4th Factor, a factor that makes the possible, possible and without its consent even the possible becomes impossible.

13. Be Happy in the NOW!

Every human being on earth wants to be Happy. There is nobody who enjoys pain. People want to achieve Happiness but they fail to realize that Happiness is the journey itself, not the destination. Then, what is the secret of eternal Joy, Bliss, and Peace? It is being Happy in the NOW. Every time we let the suffering of yesterday take charge of our life, we destroy the Joy of today. When our thoughts anxiously jump into what may happen in the future, we lose the tranquility of the present moment. We seem to be like helpless monkeys jumping from one branch to another, from yesterday to tomorrow. And in the bargain, we lose the gift of being Happy in the present. With this book, AiR hopes to inspire people to live life moment by moment, if they really want to be Happy.

14. Questions You Must Answer Before You Die

Most of us live and die but we don't ask the question – Why? We just exist! We don't want to invest time in asking

essential questions that are actually needed to lead a fulfilling and blissful life. There are so many critical questions that we must answer before our journey of life is over. What will happen to us after we die? Who created this universe? How can we be Happy all the time? Who is God, where is God, what is God? Like this, there are so many questions which we are ignorant about and somehow, we believe that ignorance is bliss. We blissfully live in ignorance till we die. Isn't it time to stop and ask questions?

15. Suffer No More

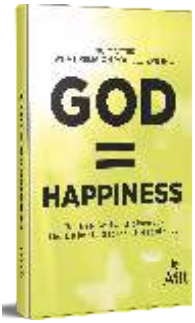
'Suffer No More' is a personal experience of overcoming anguish, anxiety, distress, and grief. We all suffer physical pain. Who on earth can escape from it? But while there is pain, can we do away with the suffering? What is suffering? While we all experience it, have we gone on a quest to understand what the primary cause of misery is? We live in this ignorance, this myth, that suffering is an unavoidable part of life. We can be free from suffering if only we realize that we are the prisoners of negative emotions that continue to make us miserable. Suffer No More is an analysis of

suffering, what causes it and how we can overcome it. If one wants to truly live with eternal Joy and everlasting Peace, it's possible! This book will help you Realize the Truth and Suffer No More!

16. Success is not Happiness... Happiness is Success

Everybody wants to succeed. If one goes deep into the psychology of winning, one will realize that people want to win because this makes them Happy, just as failure makes them miserable. People want to succeed and they do everything possible to win because they want to be happy. In fact, humanity, by and large, believes that Success is like a cause, of which happiness is the effect. In the present book, the readers will discover the reality that Success equals Happiness is an illusion. No doubt Success creates a sense of gratification that makes us Happy but Real Happiness is beyond achievement. It is contentment and fulfillment. It's time for us to realize the Truth. Instead of chasing Success to be Happy, we should try to be Happy. That is true success. We must realize that Success is not Happiness, Happiness is Success.

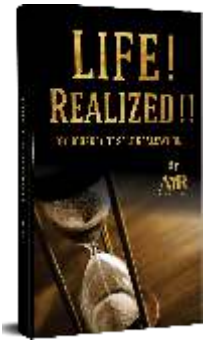
17. God = Happiness



We understand what it means to be happy, especially when we compare it to those times when we are miserable and unhappy. But how exactly is our state of joy or sorrow connected to God, remains a mystery. Yes, we pray thinking of God as somebody in heaven who has a magic wand with which he controls our Happiness. But is this true or is there something else that we are ignorant about? In his quest to discover Truth and the purpose of life, the author found answers that liberated him from misery and sorrow. He also realized that people didn't know where exactly to search for Happiness. All pray to God but do we know the Real Truth about God? We may believe in any religion but that hardly matters, because God is beyond religion. While we evolve in life, we don't spiritually evolve to realize that God is far more powerful than what we imagine. This book is not about religion. It takes us far beyond religion to Realize the Truth about God and how God is Happiness.

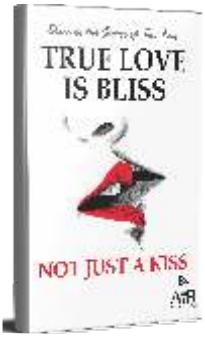
18. Life! Realized!!

The present book is a personal reflection of the author who has written several books on life, happiness, and almost



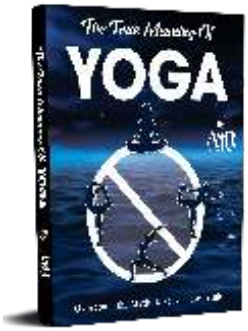
everything that matters in the life journey. Like anybody else, he too spent many years of his life chasing success and money but then, he took an exit from this first peak of happiness - Achievement, transformed his life and started living with Contentment and Fulfillment. He realized that what mattered the most was his Life Realization. There were many questions in his mind and after a profound investigation, he discovered the Truth. He decided to pen down all his realizations together to share them with the world. Those who wish to start a quest of self-realization and God-realization must read this book as it will direct them towards the path which will help them realize the Truth.

19. True Love is Bliss...Not Just a Kiss



True Love is bliss, not just a kiss. It is sad that Love which is the source of joy and happiness, is not understood by the world. The world thinks of Love to be just hugs and kisses, romance and sex. Is this True Love? No. True Love is Love from the Soul. It is Divine Love that manifests as Love from the day we are born to the day we die. Stop! Discover True Love and live your life with eternal bliss and joy.

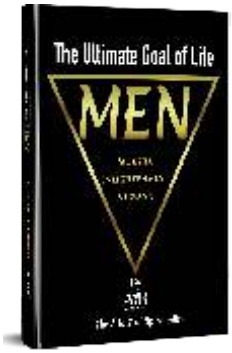
20. True Meaning of Yoga



Yoga, today, is primarily taught as a set of body postures or Asanas. Some take it a step further and include breathing exercises referred to as Pranayama. But this is not true Yoga! This may be good for our physical well-being but true Yoga is something completely different. Those who think that Yoga is just about stretching the body will be in for a big surprise when they read this book. It will trigger their mind and help them overcome the misconceptions about Yoga. Yoga, in reality, is a Union with the Divine. There is no doubt that as part of the entire Yogic experience, some saints advocated certain body postures and breathing exercises to be a part of the overall Yoga practice, but most definitely, these by themselves are not Yoga. This book attempts to explain everything about Yoga, its actual meaning and significance, how it must be practised and how through Yoga, one can be liberated and experience Ultimate Bliss and Divine Peace.

21. The Ultimate Goal of Life, MEN – Moksha, Enlightenment, Nirvana

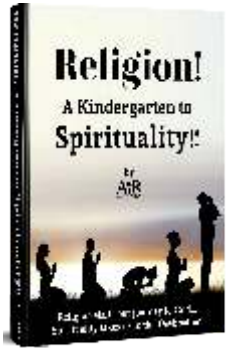
What is the Ultimate Goal of life? The whole world believes



it is to be happy, to escape from misery and suffering. If we want to escape from all misery to live a life of Eternal Peace and Everlasting Joy, the answer is MEN - Moksha, Enlightenment, and Nirvana. These are the three most tenable concepts that help us reach our Ultimate Goal of Liberation and then Unification with the Divine. The words may be different, but this is the one secret to everlasting Happiness. Let us discover how to live a life that teaches us the A to Z of Spirituality and helps us achieve Bliss and Peace. This book will show us a path that is beyond religion, a path that will make us Realize the Truth and will liberate us from misery and sorrow.

22. Religion! A Kindergarten to Spirituality

We don't choose our Religion. When we are born, we start following a Religion based on our family's belief system. Each Religion says that its God is the Creator of this world and we grow up having faith in our Religion. We practice religious dogmas without understanding what we are doing. Very few of us actually touch the subject of Spirituality - a study of the Spirit, the Soul or the Life-Energy within us. Less than 1% of humanity stops and asks



questions about the validity of what their Religion preaches and passionately follows the path of Spirituality with the aim of Self-Realization and God-Realization. They realize the Truth about God and understand that whatever they were taught was very basic, that Religion is just a kindergarten to Spirituality. The present book explains the fact that Religion is only the first step towards God-Realization but we get so pulled into rituals and superstitions that we do not pursue a Spiritual path that makes us investigate the Truth about God.

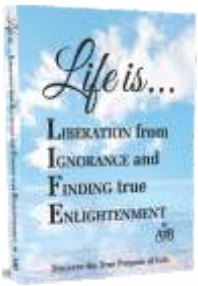
23. Why Bad things can't Happen to Good people!

Somebody questioned AiR, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" He answered without a doubt, "Bad things can't happen to good people, just like apples can't grow on mango trees. Such is the law of the universe." While AiR sent out his answer to the question, he realized that many people in this world live in ignorance with this belief and it is really sad that they think that bad things happen to good people. This made him write this book. Many authors and

philosophers have questioned the power of the Divine. But the present book by AiR will help us understand the truth that this world has been created by the Divine and it operates through certain Universal Laws. These laws need no intervention by the Creator. We must understand that the Creator is not micromanaging the problems that confront us. Whatever happens to people is controlled by a law and very few people are fortunate to discover this secret as to why things happen, both good and bad, to every human being who lives on earth.

24. LIFE is...

Liberation from Ignorance and Finding true Enlightenment



What is Life all about? Most people exist, but they don't truly live. They just zoom from womb to tomb, and then life is over. They don't stop to think, "What is the purpose of my life? What am I truly seeking?" In the pursuit of happiness, success, and achievement, people don't realize that though they may gain a lot of these, they lose their most precious gift – Life itself. The purpose of our Life, in fact, is to realize that we are prisoners, slaves who are imprisoned in the cages of misery and misfortune. We

continue to live and suffer due to our ignorance. This book shares the author's experience of Life, how he too lived in ignorance till his Spiritual Master led him on a quest, which led him to the Realization of the Truth and the true meaning of L I F E : LIBERATION from IGNORANCE and FINDING true ENLIGHTENMENT.

And Now…

25. The Ladder to Heaven

Coming soon

26. Soul

If you have any questions on happiness, suffering, success, life, rebirth, liberation or anything related to spirituality, you can visit Ask AiR, ask your questions and AiR will answer them.

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The Ladder to Heaven

Is there a Ladder to Heaven? If we pray, will we be able to go to Heaven? And, is there a place called Heaven? Has anybody seen it? Has anybody gone there? What happens after death? The body remains on earth - it returns to dust. Then who goes to Heaven?

Heaven is nothing but being with God. It is not a physical domain. We human beings live and die in ignorance. We don't know who God is, where God is and what God is, but God is. When will we realize that God is not a person, God is a power and that there is a way to unite with that power; there is a way to become one with God. But we have to climb the Ladder. We must first believe in God and then pray, and not only live with faith, hope and trust, but we must also love God.

But these are just the first steps on the Ladder. We have to go on a quest; we have to overcome ignorance and realize God. This book is a step by step method that will help us climb the virtual Ladder to Heaven and unite us with God. Let's start the journey!

By
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